

Now we can inhale some culture as well!



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Window on Jordan

By Kofeh Attah
Special to The Star
DO YOU have a few hours to while away? Fancy trying one of Jordan's most stereotypical and relaxing pastimes, *argilehs* or hookah smoking? Your choice of 'Hookah Cafe' depends on taste, budget, or word-of-mouth recommendation. Amman's most popular cafes all have their own distinctive style, take your pick.

The Rose Coffee Shop in downtown Amman is trendy yet simple, and an ideal place for hookah-smoking. New cafes come and go but Rose Coffee Shop, one of the oldest in Jordan, always retains its faithful smokers. It opened in 1948, since when modest smokers and a sprinkling of these with "nothing-better-to-do" have come to bubble off their lassitude with a variety of Egyptian and Bahraini blended tobacco for 25 fils per two-hours. It's a

pleasant way to kill time. Though old, the Rose Coffee Shop is always packed, and strives hard to provide new attractions for its customers. The number of *shishas* has increased to avoid excessive waiting, and TVs, playing cards and dominos serve as side attractions so you can play while you smoke. Visitors are welcomed with *Ahlan wa Sahlan*, or, if you don't look Arabic: "you are welcome mister". Mind

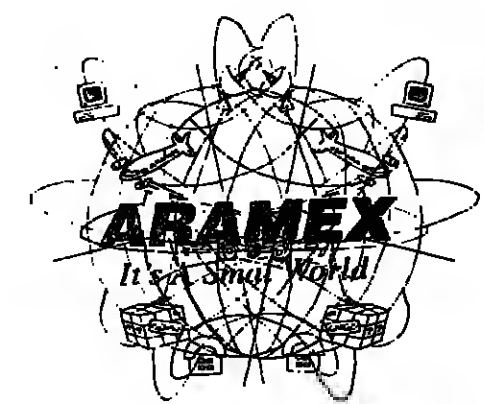
The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

Bienvenue au royaume des chauffards!

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اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Thuneibat not hopeful over talks; Islamists expect King to intervene

By Raed Al Abed
Star Staff Writer

THE MUCH publicized dialogue between the government and the opposition parties, which began over two weeks ago, does not appear to have lifted off the launch pad. Talks are still bogged down by differences over mechanisms and agendas. The Islamists-led opposition has given the government until early next week to give an answer on whether it accepts a proposed agenda for negotiations. Failing to do so, observers believe will mean the end of a dialogue process that wasn't going anywhere.

It will also mean that the Islamists will have returned from the Prime Ministry empty-handed thus leaving them with no choice but to continue with their decision to boycott the elections.

Since early July, both the government and the opposition, particularly the Islamists, held several meetings, but failed to agree on an agenda and mechanism for dialogue. Also both had failed to discuss the substantive issues, which are the root cause for the opposition's decision to abstain from taking part in the November elections.

The question that is on everybody's minds is does the government really want the dialogue to succeed? Prime Minister Abdel Salam Al Majali said in several press interviews that it was the opposition that had decided to boycott the elections and is now calling for negotiations over their demands. The government's point of view is that the issues on the table are rabited laws that can only be dealt with by an elected parliament.

In Majali's view, the only crisis that he knows of is within the ranks of the Islamists.

But the Muslim Brotherhood says the government has had a change of heart over the dialogue issue. "At the beginning it agreed on an unconditional dialogue, however since then they have come to consider our



Thuneibat: Pessimistic

demands as sacred principles that are not open to negotiation," said Abdel Majeed Thuneibat, the Overseer of the Muslim Brotherhood. He is pessimistic and doubts that the dialogue with the government will be bear fruit.

Leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood feel that the government does not want the opposition to participate in the coming elections, thus giving the National Constitutional Party (NCP), which the Islamists stamp as "a government-made party", a free hand to take the elections.

"The government is not concerned with our participation, despite His Majesty's confirmation of the importance of our participation, and despite His appreciation of the Brotherhood's role," Thuneibat told The Star this week. "This government is not qualified to operate the elections since its Cabinet includes eight members of the NCP," and also since "this government adopted

the NCP and considers it as the [coming] ruling party and gave it wide promotional coverage in the official media, while hampering the opposition parties."

Even talks between the government and the five opposition parties which had called for a conditional participation, failed to achieve any progress. In a meeting between the Prime Minister and heads of the five parties last Sunday, the government considered their conditions as issues of principle and also rejected their demand for a judicial authority to observe the elections.

In a press conference held by these parties, leaders said "the meeting with the premier was open and was an introduction to dialogue," but they added that "no progress was made."

In other developments opposition parties sent a letter to the Prime Minister protesting remarks made by the Minister of Interior, Nather Rashid, during

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HATCHED IN CAPTIVITY—A rare Madagascar tomato frog (*Dyscophus antongilii*) looks into the camera at the Baltimore Zoo Reptile House where the zoo's curator of amphibians, Anthony Wisniewski, and the amphibian keeper, Erik Anderson, say they have developed an environmental setting to put the frogs in a romantic mood. The result about 4,000 baby tomato frogs and tadpoles. Named for their bright color, the tomato frogs can grow to the size of a plump, ripe tomato when they are fed a steady diet of newborn rodents and insects.

Netanyahu courts Japan as technology partner

By Kevin Sullivan

TOKYO—Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, on his first trip to East Asia, ended his visit to Japan this week by offering the region's corporate giants a "marriage made in economic heaven." In meetings with Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and leaders of Japanese industry, Netanyahu has been touting what he says is the news from Israel that is often lost in the blur of daily headlines about Middle East politics and security.

"We are changing the face of Israel to become one of the three or four leading centers of technology in the world," Netanyahu said in a speech to foreign correspondents here.

Netanyahu said Israel has seen "explosive growth" in high-tech innovation, in areas such as biotechnology, robotics, laser technology and computers. He said Israel has 1,000 new start-up companies in high technology, second only to the United States.

Now, he said, Israel needs partners to turn its ideas into profits. So he is spending the week touring Japan and South Korea to pitch Israeli know-how.

"Innovation without production and marketing is useless," he said. "I am here to offer a marriage made in economic heaven between the formidable Japanese production and marketing capabilities and Israel's newfound technological prowess."

Netanyahu, who has an MBA from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said that much of Israel's growth in high technology is the result of "a curse that has become a blessing." He said his nation's massive spending on defense is generally a drag on the economy, but it has had the unintended benefit of producing well-trained scientists and innovators and breakthroughs in high-tech areas.

"In order to have an effective military defense, we have had to keep ourselves at the cutting edge of technology, especially at the cutting edge of intelligence technology," he said. He said Israeli firms, using technology developed by the military, are leaders in providing encryption services for private electronic transmissions. An Israeli company, he said, has provided all the encryption services for Rupert Murdoch's global media



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto. Netanyahu is heading a large Israeli delegation to East Asia in a bid to attract investments.

operations. "The military serves as a perpetual motion machine that throws into the Israeli civilian marketplace thousands of (scientists) and hundreds of entrepreneurs," he said.

Netanyahu said high technology also has bloomed in Israel because of the large immigration

Jesus' birthplace under siege Palestinian bitterness grows over Israeli closure

By Marjorie Miller
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

BETHLEHEM—On the 27th day of an Israeli military closure, Palestinian vendors sat idle and angry Tuesday in the shade of Manger Square while soldiers turned away tourist buses at checkpoints surrounding this Palestinian-ruled city. Teachers and children, shut into their villages, missed the third day of school in Bethlehem. And Palestinian youths clashed with Israeli soldiers under a cloud of tear gas at the city's edge, as Mayor Hanna Nassar railed against what he called the worst Israeli "siege" of Bethlehem in his quarter-century of public service.

This city has never seen

such a hard and tough closure and siege around Bethlehem. We are completely isolated from the rest of the West Bank," Nassar said from his offices overlooking the Nativity Church. "The Israelis have no right to impose collective punishment on all our people."

Israel closed off the West Bank July 30 after two suicide bombers blew themselves up in Jerusalem's Mahane Yehuda market, killing 14 people. Afterward, a leaflet claimed the Islamic extremist group Hamas was responsible for the bombing, although this has not been confirmed and the bombers have not been identified.

The government has gradually relaxed the internal closure between other Palestinian cities and villages, but keeps a tight seal on the Bethlehem area, alleging that military cells of Hamas and other extremist groups are operating freely there.

"Our security forces have information that Hamas and Islamic Jihad units are active in Bethlehem without restraint from the Palestinian Authority and that they are planning something," said David Bar-Ilan, a spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He said suspects detained by Palestinian police were "not being interrogated. It is more like protective custody."

The mayor denied the Israeli charges and said the closure has cost Bethlehem \$10 million to \$12 million in lost revenues. In the empty shops and streets of Bethlehem, meanwhile, bitterness welled. Palestinians insisted the closure is not a security measure but economic pressure and revenge for the bombing.

"I don't know what game they're playing," said Samir Mitri, who sells checkered head scarves outside of the Nativity Church, celebrated as the birthplace of Jesus. "If this is really about security why are they not allowing the pilgrims in?"

Bethlehem normally sees about 60 to 70 tour buses a day. That had come to a halt until Tuesday, when a

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INSIDE



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Where have the French designers gone?

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Coffee beans and food adventures in Yemen

Cigarette companies concede defeat Florida agrees to \$11.3bn tobacco industry deal

By Mark Suzman
Washington—Florida agreed to accept payment of \$11.3bn over the next 25 years from

\$3.6bn deal made by Mississippi last month, and ends a lawsuit currently under way in the state. As a court-enforced settlement, it does not require legislative approval and takes effect immediately.

World Report

five tobacco companies, becoming the second US state to reach a settlement with the industry. Much of the money will be used to defray the costs of treating smoking-related illnesses.

The agreement, reached in negotiations between state officials and industry lawyers late last Sunday, follows a similar

trial talks, but Lawton Chiles, state governor, said the final agreement represented a victory because it included tough

restrictions on advertising and required the release of confidential industry documents. "The tobacco industry has conceded defeat and we have a settlement of historic proportions," he said.

Representatives from the tobacco companies involved said the settlement was a "concrete demonstration" that the industry was prepared to cooperate with government and public health authorities to prevent under-age smoking.

This week's deal would be largely superseded if a proposed \$368.5bn national settlement between states and the

industry currently being considered by the White House and Congress becomes law. However, both Mississippi and Florida will receive industry payments regardless of whether the national deal receives legislative approval.

Texas, the next state with an anti-tobacco lawsuit scheduled to come to trial, is also expected to reach a settlement with the industry. However, Minnesota, which follows in January, is more likely to insist on a jury trial if no national settlement has yet been agreed.

President Bill Clinton is

known to have reservations about several elements of the broader settlement, particularly proposed restrictions on the right of the Food and Drug Administration to regulate tobacco.

However, over the weekend Michael Moore, Mississippi attorney general and a leading architect of the deal, suggested that tobacco firms were willing to compromise on FDA regulation. Although his remarks were later played down by industry lawyers, Mr Moore said the companies had agreed to modify a requirement that the FDA prove the existence of a black market in cigarettes before imposing new regulations.

A White House spokesman said that an administration review of the proposed settlement was nearly complete and would be presented to Mr Clinton after he returned from holiday next month.

Financial Times News Service

Netanyahu: Japan ready to sponsor Jordan-Israel water project

THE JAPANESE are not against having their funding and expertise harnessed for an Israeli-Jordanian water desalination project. The Jerusalem Post quoted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as saying in Tokyo this week.

"They raised the subject," Netanyahu pointed out, referring to his talks with Japan's defense and trade ministers, as well as to his initial conversation with his Japanese counterpart, Ryutaro Hashimoto.

"The government of Japan is prepared to allocate funds and know-how to this end. They asked for a detailed proposal. Had they not wanted to go ahead, they would have said it was difficult or dangerous," said the prime minister. He added that in all his meetings he had stressed that existing and future agreements between Israel, the Palestinians, and the neighboring Arab states "could be torpedoed" by disputes over water, according to the Post.

He contended that "no single state" can build seawater conversion and sewerage purification plants by itself. But once the Israeli-Jordanian project gets underway, he went on, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians can join in subsequent stages. "Japan is interested in being the driving force," he said.

Throw away your glasses!

Young Jordanian's myopia therapy promises to be an eye opener!

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

NATURAL THERAPY is increasingly popular today, with more and more people turning from conventional medicine to alternative methods.

In their search to find a cure for pain, ordinary people and researchers are discovering that the best remedy for many diseases lies within simple and uncomplicated methods.

A Jordanian dentist claims to have invented a natural cure for shortsightedness (myopia), long-sightedness (hyperopia) and eye strabismus.

Dr Nihad Al Juneidi, who holds a degree in Dentistry, graduated from medical school in Russia last year. During his studies, he discovered a theory for treating eyesight problems with a very simple process.

His treatment basically depends on exercises of the eye muscle. He says the idea is to let the eye concentrate on pictures or objects for a fixed time and at a certain distance from the eye. Dr Al Juneidi says his device provides a good

training exercise for the muscle and tissues of the eye. The inventor's idea is based on the relation between close and distant objects. He is proud of his invention and stresses that his theory requires no surgery.

He says that by using his device, those who wear glasses will soon throw them away, adding that there isn't even a need for eye drops or contact lenses. Treatment sessions needed vary according to the age of the patient, and treatment at a young age is more effective than when older. On average, he adds, there may be 10 sessions within one month, each lasting from five to 10 minutes.

Dr Al Juneidi has already discussed his method with one of his professors in Russia who was enthusiastic about the theory and encouraged him.

When Dr Al Juneidi returned to Jordan last year he applied to the Ministry of Industry and Trade to get a patent for his "Visus Moocularis" (adjusting eyesight).

The Ministry sent a letter to the Ministry of Health to make sure that such an

invention is based on proper scientific grounds.

The Health Ministry formed a three-man Committee of Ophthalmologists to study the invention.

The committee were not convinced, and argued that it had no relation to his study as a dentist.

But this is not true. Dr Al Juneidi says that at medical school in Russia he took courses on Ophthalmology. He found the committee's demand for him to carry out experiments on animals "illogical".

"I asked the committee to allow me to do experiments on people under the supervision of specialized ophthalmologists, but they refused," he told The Star.

Dr Al Juneidi is now appealing to the committee to discuss the issue with him and not be hasty in passing judgement.

He is currently treating three cases and adds they are ready to give evidence about the efficiency of his method. One case has been totally cured after 50 minutes of treatment.

What is also interesting is that he first practised this method on himself. He used to wear glasses but after experi-

mentation, has become completely cured.

What is knocking down his hopes is the response the Health Ministry sent to the Ministry of Industry last June, saying the committee states that his method has no scientific basis.

The invention has now been adopted by the Science and Technology Club, an independent organization that encourages inventors.

Director of the Club, Mr Suleiman Al Abbadi, who has an MSc in Engineering, told The Star that he is totally convinced of Dr Juneidi's theory.

Al Abbadi says present medical theory states that the eye muscle expands and shrinks according to the distance of the object, but that the eye has a limited "adaptation" distance. However, Al

Abbadi continues that the Al Juneidi invention is based on a completely different theory which would, if adapted, turn the prevailing theory upside down.

He says that adaptation of the eye muscle to the distance of the object has no limit. ■



Al Juneidi

Netanyahu courts Japan as technology partner

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is second with 85 scientists per 10,000 population.

Japan is Israel's second-largest trading partner, behind the United States, with \$2.2 billion in bilateral trade last year. Israel is the largest provider of polished diamonds in Japan's lucrative jewelry market, and it supplies computer graphics and telecommunications and medical equipment. Japan's exports to Israel are mainly automobiles and electronics.

The Japanese like to describe themselves as the inhabitants of a crowded island poor in natural resources. Netanyahu described Israel the same way: "We lack natural resources, except the talent and capacity of our people. Israel is a big head on a small body."

On Middle East security matters, Netanyahu told the gathered reporters that Iran and Iraq are potentially the region's most dangerous threat because they "are not partners in the peace process and they're arming themselves feverishly." Netanyahu said Chinese officials had assured him, during his brief stopover in Beijing, that they are not planning to supply Iran with the means to build a nuclear reactor.

"One would hope that the specific pledge that I received in Beijing reflects a general Chinese decision to prevent the arming of Iran," Netanyahu said. "And I would encourage all responsible parties on the international scene to act to ensure that Iran does not arm itself with nonconventional weapons."

He was upbeat about the Japanese authorities' decision to open an office of the Japan External Trade Organization in Tel Aviv in October. He said the opening will be followed by the arrival of business delegations seeking opportunities for joint research and development.

"This is the first step to a basic change in Japan's approach to the Middle East," Netanyahu said. He contended that the Japanese realize the Arabs' virtual monopoly over oil no longer exists, and that Israel's \$100 billion economy is likely to overtake that of Saudi Arabia and all the other Arab states. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Smoke

Continued from page 1

you, the waiter's English doesn't go beyond this. If yours does, you might attract a chain of interpreters, each one's English worse than the last.

For a quick drink, try Mahal Al Omali coffee shop. It's in an alley called Ibn Tareef Street, between Al Hashimi and Quraish streets, the two principal streets in the city center. Mahal Al Omali is the perfect venue for travellers arriving in or leaving Amman, who want to smoke one for the road or to cool their exhausted bodies after a long trip.

Mahal Al Omali is a small, crowded travellers' cafe, where you can smoke anything from small to extra-large hookahs with Arab businessmen and travellers, for a mere 20 fils per two hours.

For a more sedate evening, the Al Sultan Coffee Shop is perhaps more suitable. The elite regulars pay up to JD 1.25 fils to pose and be seen.



Smoking the Argilehs: A favorite pastime in Amman's cafes (Photo by Fouad Jhour, The Star)

Since its grand opening in 1993, it has become Amman's aristocrat of coffee shops. From the moment you step out of your car into the high-brow Shmeisani area and enter Al

Sultan, you are immersed in refined, sophisticated elegance. The entrance alone is impressive. Customers are greeted by ever-smiling waiters in traditional Arab dress, who usher smokers to their tables.

The decor follows the trend of European clubs, with a slightly Oriental touch. The tables are adorned with silver ash-trays, and well spaced enough to permit private conversation. Although the shisha can take a while to arrive, a cold drink or hot shai or gahwa instantly follows. The tobacco is grouped in flavours. You can smoke all the flavours except orange. The apple, strawberry, 'cocktail' and 'fagghin' blends are from Bahrain, whilst the more exotic sulum and

baghloul varieties are from Egypt. These classic flavours can all get you 'high'. Tombak and ajeme are natural tobacco flavors from Iran.

Mohammed Awad, the Manager at Al Sultan, offers the best service to his clients. "We are one of the best, if not the best in Jordan" he says. The enormous window and terrace in front afford good views of the teeming streets of Shmeisani by night. The brightness and lighting give the place a more homely feel than some of the traditional hookah smoking spots.

So, if you have time on your hands, why not sample a few cafes for yourself... if you're not already in one, that is! ■

Palestinian bitterness grows over Israeli closure

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Catholic cardinal managed to wrangle an exception for several hundred Italian tourists who came to celebrate a Mass.

George Barbul shouted a friendly hello in Italian to a group of them, but failed to entice anyone into his gift shop off the plaza. "Really, do the Israelis think the guy who wants to do a suicide operation will come through the checkpoint? They are crazy," Barbul said against a backdrop of olive wood Last Suppers and carvings of Jesus on the cross.

"Bethlehem is competition for the Israelis for tourism. They want peace with all the power, but they aren't going to get it. You know, if you use common sense, in the end it will be good for you. But if you try to use power, in the end it will not be good," he said.

"People are desperate and upset," added Aisha Shalan, 26, who was shopping for bread for her family. "Israel is making life impossible for us. What can we do?"

Scores of Palestinian youths did the only thing they could think of—throw rocks at Israeli soldiers in exchange for rubber bullets and tear gas. Six Palestinians were wounded, and about a dozen Palestinian girls were treated for gas inhalation when a tear gas canister landed in the courtyard of their school.

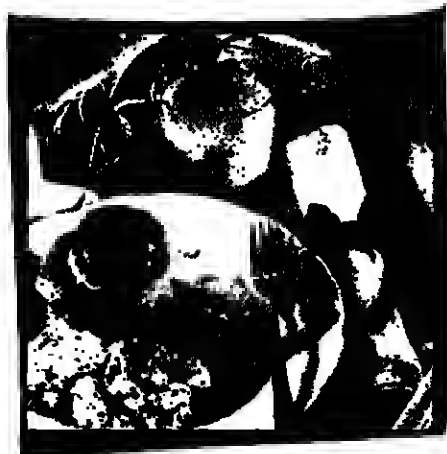


School girls suffer after a gas canister thrown by Israeli soldiers lands in their school courtyard in Bethlehem

Palestinians said they could foresee no easy way out of the current crisis. "We are trying to push the Israelis to lift the closure," said Maher Said, an 18-

year-old who has joined in several of the clashes. But asked if it would work, he shook his head. "I expect not very good things to happen." ■

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JORDAN

Thuneibat not hopeful over talks

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ing a televised interview recently. During the interview, Mr Rashid underestimated the importance of small opposition parties, claiming that only two parties (pointing to the Islamic Action Front and the NCP) were qualified to win seat in the Lower House. He also accused opposition parties of bankruptcy and made a mockery of their budgets by saying "some parties cannot afford the cost of manifest."

The letter called on Mr Majali to repent and the minister asked for a public apology. They threatened to bring a legal case against him.

Commenting on this issue, Thuneibat said that he "cannot trust a government that says in advance that these parties [opposition] have no chance of reaching Parliament. This means that these parties will not reach Parliament by the power of the government, which confirms that this government lacks credibility and honesty."

The current crisis was set off when the Muslim Brotherhood declared last month that it was boycotting the coming elections. They were followed by other opposition parties, professional associations and other popular figures.

Although the government is not showing signs of embarrassment over the recent accusations targeted at its credibility, the announcement two weeks ago by about 100 prominent Jordanian figures, including two former prime ministers, that they were boycotting the elections, must have hurt the government's image the most.

Another style of opposition has been created, in the form of statements sent directly to the King complaining of government policies, and pointing to issues of official corruption. Two opposition personalities pioneered these tactics, Laila Sbeilat and Toujan Faisal. Ms Faisal's message to the King was the most important, accusing a former minister, who now heads a political party, and his

son of corruption.

Faisal Al Majali, the head of the pan-Arabist Al Ansar Party, sent a message to the King criticizing the government of his relative Abdel Salam Al Majali and claiming that the NCP, headed by the brother of the premier, Abdel Hadi Al Majali, is heading towards annexing his party members, pointing to the protection and security company owned by the head of the NCP. Faisal Al Majali also expressed fears for his own life because of his opposition stance.

Among the issues that the Brotherhood insists on discussing are normalization with Israel and the government's economic reform program imposed by the IMF and World Bank.

"In the light of the daily economic deterioration, we say normalization has become a big threat and stopping it has become a Jordanian, and an Arab demand, to stand against the Zionist projects, which threatens the whole Umma," Thuneibat said.

In recent weeks, the King appeared to be working to bring the sides closer to each other. He called for dialogue several times during his tour around the Kingdom. He also laid down guidelines for this dialogue saying that everything can be discussed as long as parties agree to honor the Constitution and the National Charter.

However, observers believe that it is the King, and not the government, who has the higher authority to decide the fate of the stalemated talks. The Islamists believe that the King will interfere to save the talks and bring all factions together.

"Since we all agree that there is a crisis, we expect His Majesty will intervene as usual to solve the conflict and to decide the coming steps which will help to convince us to participate," Thuneibat said. ■

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JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional
report on Jordanian
news and views edited
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UNRWA charges fees

The United Nations Works and Relief Agency (UNRWA) could start charging fees from pupils who are attending its schools for the 1997/98 academic year. There are 149,000 students who attend UNRWA schools in Jordan. The organization is also contacting other countries that host refugees to inform them of its new step. The new fees will be equal to those that are charged by the governments in these countries. The really poor pupils however, will be exempted from these fees. As of last week UNRWA has frozen the appointment of any international staff as well as the creation of any new jobs. It has also cut scholarships and finance needed for the renovation of some houses in the camps. The government has already officially rejected any cuts that would reduce UNRWA services in the camps.

Aqaba airport receives tourists for Eilat

As from 1 September, some planes bound for Eilat will be allowed to land in the Aqaba International Airport. Head of the Civil Aviation Authority Mr Jassir Zayad points out that this is an "experimental operation," until the joint airport project gets underway. Mr Zayad says it was agreed by Jordan and Israel that some international flights will now be diverted to Aqaba instead of Eilat. This step was due to be taken last June, however, Jordan refused to implement it because of what they called unacceptable Israeli security conditions. The joint airport project, which takes its place in Aqaba, is to serve Eilat and southern Israel. The cost of the project estimated by an American company at \$125 million is considered too high by Jordan and Israel, who are working to reduce the costs.

Anger at Lloyds

Lloyds inspectors stationed in the Aqaba ports are under fire again. This time, it is from both the Chamber of Industry's Khalidoun Abu Hassan and the head of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Haider Murad. In a letter sent to the Minister of Transport Bassam Al Saket, they opposed the continuation of Lloyds at the Aqaba airport. Mr Murad said such an inspection regime only increases the financial burden on companies, dissipates the country of valuable foreign currency and increases the negative effects it has on the ordinary citizen. Mr Murad added that the Ministry of Transport promised that it will follow up on the issue. Mr Murad pointed out that if there is a pressing need for inspection of commodities reaching the Aqaba port then local insurance companies are more than capable of doing it.

New Party

A new political party of retired army officers is presently under formation. The founding committee of the National Reform Party already has 1800 retired army officers. This figure is likely to increase further in time for the November Lower House elections. The National Reform will bring the number of registered parties in the country to 18.

Outstanding dues

This time it is the turn of the professionals. The membership of 10,000 engineers could be frozen from the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) for not paying their dues. The number forms 30 percent of the total number of engineers in the association which is 36,000. However, it is suggested that half of these have not paid their dues. Annual membership fees are JD 30, JD 15 of which goes to the Social Security Fund, JD 3 to the Friends of the Palestinian Engineers Fund, and JD 12 to the Fund of the association. The revenues of the JEA stand at JD 33 million, JD 26 of which are in the Retirement Fund of the JEA.

Jerusalem conference

The Popular Conference for the Defence of Jerusalem, which ended a two-day event in Amman last week produced a blistering set of documents to safeguard Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Territories from what it called "Zionist aggression." A special charter was drawn up for the defence of Jerusalem that included tens of projects which are still to be implemented. The Amman conference must be understood in terms of its long term perspective. A number of committees are already being formed across the Arab world and Islamic nations to work out plans to counteract the Israeli encroachment. The conference will be an annual one, held on 21 August to coincide with the burning of the Al Aqsa Mosque in 1969. About 1800 people from 22 Arab countries and 13 foreign ones attended the conference, including top opposition leaders from Jordan.

Al Nabulsi's government under limelight

Suleiman Al Nabulsi's government of 1956 is the topic of a two-day conference that begins on Saturday 30 August. Organized by the Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center, the venue concentrates on three perspectives: the November 1956 elections and its effects on the political life of the country, political parties, and the domestic and foreign policy during the Nabulsi government. Six papers are to be given including those relating to political developments of the 1950s, the Social Nationalist Party, the Bathist, leftists and the Islamist trends, and the role of the army in politics. The conference will end with a roundtable on the Al Nabulsi government and the political crisis of 1957.

New Jordan magazine in US

A NEW magazine, *Jordan Affairs*, will soon be published in the United States by the Middle East Consultations & Research Analysis, MECA, an independent research center in Florida. It will be edited by the center's founder and director Dr Jamal A. Shurdom. The magazine is described as one that "promises to be the true torch of democracy and human rights." Dr Shurdom said that *Jordan Affairs* is designed to expand the free voice of the Jordanians far away from the fear of government interference. The purpose is to encourage communications among all factions in Jordan opposition and pro-government forces alike. Input from Jordanians and parties concerned will be encouraged. But it is stressed that only positive criticism is welcomed.

"We believe the national interests of any political leaders and people are more vital than the interests of any political leaders and individuals," Dr Shurdom said in a letter sent to *The Star*.

"We invite your views to be published. Articles must be edited due to space clarity and to maintain basic moral standards. Due to difficult and understandable security reasons, we have honored our contributors requests for anonymity," the letter added.

Contact: Mr. Randy Wright,
Dir. E-mail MECAPEACE@AOL.COM



His Majesty King Hussein met with the people of the Ajloun Governorate Wednesday and said the upcoming election will be held on time and according to the law. He said the elections will give an opportunity for people to elect the best representatives to Parliament stressing that the interests of the homeland are above all other interests. The King, who was accompanied on his visit by Prime Minister Abdel Salam Majali and Chief of the Royal Court Awn Al Khasawneh, added that the real authority belongs to the people and it is their interests that should be considered. (Photo by Khalil Maqawi)

Jordan rejects Israeli reports about Yarmouk dam relocation

AMMAN (Star)—Top Jordanian officials were busy this week trying to limit damage that could result from a report published in the Israeli paper *Haaretz* claiming that Israel and Jordan had relocated a projected dam site on the Yarmouk river to Syrian occupied territory.

Jordanian officials denied the report and accused Israel of attempting to spoil relations between Jordan and Syria.

Foreign Minister Dr Fajez Tarawneh described the report as baseless. "In the light of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, the dam was proposed to be built in a neutral area that is not involved in the conflict between Syria and Israel."

But in a latest development on the issue, Minister of Water Dr Munthir Haddadin told the press after meeting Sharon in Tel Aviv on Tuesday that Sharon stressed that news about the dam's relocation, which were attributed to him, were unfounded.

He denied any Israeli activity in the Syrian territory, which remains at the core of the dispute in the Syrian-Israeli peace talks.

Dr Haddadin refuted Israeli claims and clarified that "we don't know about the Israeli intentions to build the dam in the Golan Heights

or other Syrian occupied territories near Al Yarmouk River. We have not made any agreement in this regard."

Haddadin said that according to the Jordan-Israeli peace treaty the two countries agreed to build a dam on the Yarmouk River to divert Jordan's water share to the King Abdullah Canal. He stressed that the proposed construction site is near Al Adasiyah and "is not linked to the Golan Heights."

He added that it will be built on Jordanian and Israeli lands.

Haddadin confirmed that the design, planning and finance of the dam is also Jordanian.

Minister of State for Information Affairs, Samir Mutaweh expressed the dismay of the government over the news report and stressed that Jordan is keen to protect the interest of any Arab brotherly country and will not take actions that could affect the outcome of negotiations



Haddadin



Sharon

between other parties.

He added that Jordan was not obliged to clarify its position and that there were no differences between Jordan and Syria.

Jordan's anger over the news report was reportedly the reason for a cancellation of a planned visit by Israeli Minister for Infrastructure Ariel Sharon to Jordan.

The Jerusalem based *Al Quds* newspaper said the visit was cancelled upon Jordan's request.

It said that Sharon was at the center of this row because he had reportedly changed the location of the proposed dam from an Israeli

area to an area near Al Hima, which is a Syrian territory occupied by Israel.

The dam's construction is stipulated in the annex of the 1994 Jordan-Israeli peace treaty. It states that the two countries will cooperate to build a dam to divert water from Al Yarmouk River near Adasiyah.

In a related development, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in Tokyo that Japan had expressed willingness to contribute in joint water projects between Jordan and Israel. (See story on page one.)

Press Corner

Edited by Raed Al Abed

The season of dialogue

On both banks of the Jordan River, dialogue is the buzz word. In Jordan, "democratic dialogue" is supposedly going on between the government and the opposition while in the Palestinian territories, "national dialogue" was held between the Palestinian National Authority and the opposition movements.

On the Jordanian side, the dialogue aims at continuing the democratic process and safeguarding its gains, while on the Palestinian side the dialogue aims at regaining national unity and confronting Israeli policies. However, Mr Fahd Al Remawi, the editor of *Al Mujd* weekly, wrote that the two forms of dialogue on both sides are only concentrating on policies and practices, not on the causes of the political crises which have led to rifts in national unity and breaches in democracy in Jordan and Palestine.

Al Remawi, who is an opponent of the Jordanian and Palestinian peace agreements with Israel, wrote that the main reason behind the crises is the signing of the Wadi Araba and Oslo agreements.

He stressed that it was the Oslo agreements which divided the Palestinian people and drove a wedge into the Palestinian political movements, forcing 10 Palestinian factions to remain in Syria. He also believes that Oslo I and II will foil attempts to reach national consensus among Palestinians.

He also added it was the Wadi Araba accord which ended the "historical alliance" between the Muslim Brotherhood and the government. It was the Wadi Araba agreement which forced the government to impose semi-martial laws, according to Remawi. He believes that the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty has forced the government to restructure the political map in Jordan by creating its own version of deputies and pre-government political parties. Remawi said that the government approach was "the first in the history of Jordan."

The same has happened with the Palestinians, Remawi said, restructuring the political map so as to comply with the Oslo era.

The writer welcomed the Palestinian national dialogue and the Jordanian democratic dialogue, but he maintained that "such dialogue should aim at relieving both people from their crises by gradually hurrying Oslo and Wadi Araba." "The enemy does not want peace; it wants submission. Oslo and Wadi Araba participated in transferring the crisis from the Israeli house to the Jordanian and Palestinian houses," he said.

Suspicious approach

In an attempt to invade the bastion of the Social Security Corp. (SSC) which is described as the most wealthy of government institutions, Sami Zubaidi asked, in his weekly column in *Al Belad*, "Who benefits from the money of the SSC?"

He wrote that it is possible for the premier to invest the money of the SSC in national projects or support one company or another by using funds of the SSC which are originally owned by the working people of Jordan. The writer said such an approach is "unfair" since this money belongs to workers, while the government is dominating it.

The writer expressed fears for the future of these funds. He speculated that rumor has it, ministries are borrowing millions SSC coffers. Zubaidi said that there are no guarantees that these loans will be settled.

Also, he asks that if rumors are proved correct that people's savings at the SSC have been used to bail unsuccessful companies or have been invested in bankrupt companies, then something must be done to put a stop to this.

"Some might say that freeing these funds does not serve its owners, and we say this is true, but what kind of investment are we talking about?" he asked.

"Let us admit, what is going on is a violation of the law and a trespass on people's money, which should be corrected," Zubaidi concluded.

The Star
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645380

1st international teaching event seeks to bridge diverse cultures

By Hala Shaker and
Kerry O'Neill
Special to *The Star*

LITERATURE COULD be a key to bridging cultures. It is with this in mind that the 'First International Conference on Arabic-English Contrastive & Comparative Studies' was held in Amman last week.

Under the patronage of Dr Fawzi Gharaibeh, president of the University of Jordan (UJ), it was a five-day event. It is the University's policy to foster academic links between departments of English and translation both in universities in the Arab world, and globally. More than 160 scholars and professors from over 20 countries attended the event.

Dr Lewis Mukkattash, head of the English department at the UJ said that the main aim is to institutionalize the teaching of comparative and contrastive literature in the Arab world by making the conference an annual event.

The idea of the venue was conceived at the university's English department; and an Organizing Committee was quickly established. The committee has been preparing for the event and corresponding with English departments and institutions abroad since January. The conference and full tour of events arranged for the participants was sponsored by individuals, and private and governmental institutions.

Mr Nader Jallad of the Organizing committee, said that "despite initial funding difficulties we managed to put the event on," by operating on a tight budget.

The participants expressed their deepest appreciation for the opportunity of being brought together in participation in such a groundbreaking event. Dr Mahmoud Shetawi, head of the English department at Yarmouk University, praised the organization and hoped the conference would help further strengthen the relations between scholars, researchers and professors of the Arab universities.

"At last the bridge between Arab universities has been established."

Ideally, Dr Mukkattash would like to see an 'association of professors of English Language and Literature' come into being, giving English teaching departments at Arab universities a clearer and more coherent, defined role.

Over 110 working papers covering a broad range of topics were presented, as well as some plenary sessions and three panel discussions covering the main themes of the conference: 1) Western Arabic relations via cross-cultural relations 2) Literature and the teaching of translation: Academia vs Professionalism and 3) various aspects

of contrastive Arabic and English studies at syntactic and lexical levels.

Dr Al Shetawi presented a paper which examines Shakespeare's treatment of the orient in his drama. "The orient is treated negatively in *Othello*." For example, "The Jew, the Moor, and the Turk are portrayed as outsiders whose values and character conflict with renaissance thinking and temperament."

Professor Tariq Al Ani, head of the language department at Baghdad University said "This first conference aims at unifying the efforts of professors and scholars at Arab Universities, for the sake of enriching the studies related to comparative and contrastive Arabic English Studies."

Dr Tariq stressed the importance of transferring and translating cultures and literatures between nations, adding that the event was a great opportunity to introduce all those interested in advancing applied linguistic, enterprise and theory to the most up-to-date studies in this area, with particular reference to the Arabic-English field.

Perhaps the most significant objective is "bringing together what have so far been disparate disciplines occupying separate rooms in the same house" says the distinguished professor Basil Hatim of Heriot-Watt University in Scotland. "Literary

expression," he says, is "a form of communication, as are the instructions on medicine bottles or indeed in the Bible". This concept has been vigorously promoted by a number of scholars and professors. "Culture in context" was also an emerging theme throughout the conference, with Basil Hatim noting that in a broad sense, "culture" can

even include your 'way of thinking'. What arose from the conference, was that translating literature offers the chance for a greater fusion between the cultures of our world.

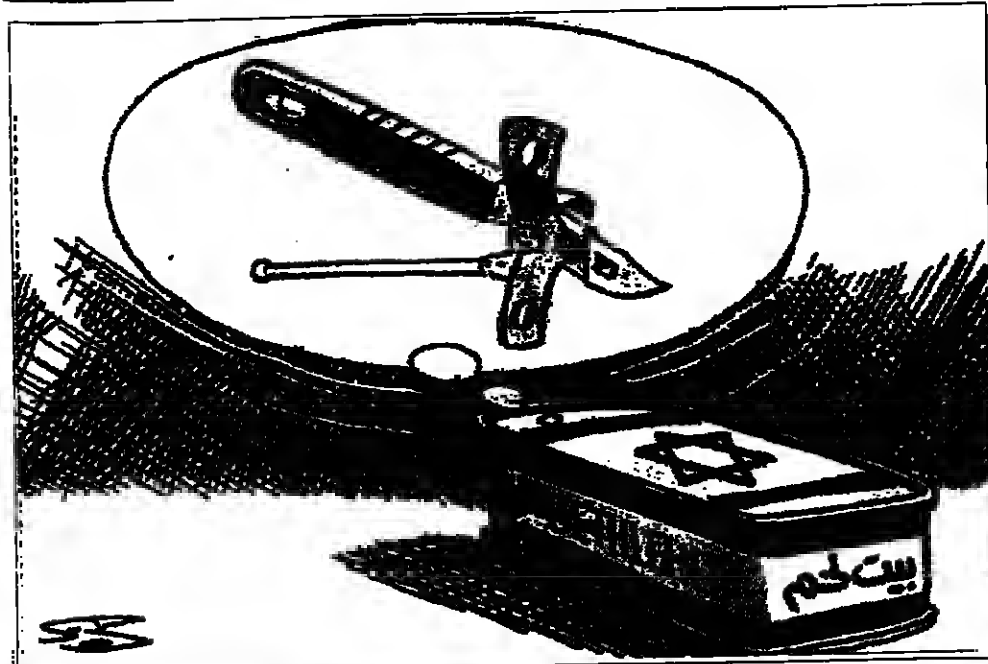
During the conference, Dr Abdullah Shunnaq of Yarmouk University discussed the problems associated with translating Arabic Islamic

documents into English, whilst other participants discussed the cultural contact between Arabs and 'The West'.

Dr Mukkattash said that the Organising Committee intends to assess and evaluate the findings and papers of the conference, with a view to publishing them at a later date.



One of the sessions at the conference



Our Say...

More about the dialogue

ASSUMING THAT the much-publicized dialogue between the government and opposition parties over the latter's decision to boycott the upcoming November parliamentary elections collapses, what does this say about Jordan's seven-year experiment with democracy?

The dialogue, about two weeks old now, has failed to proceed beyond formalities and photo-ops. Both sides appear to be locked in by their own mind set—the government unwilling to go into substance while the opposition lacking a clear vision of what it really wants to achieve at this stage.

With election date looming closer, the gridlock refuses to unravel and no party has the ability, or willingness, to cut the Gordian Knot and move forward.

So what if the dialogue falters and breaks down? What if the Islamists and the rest of the opposition find themselves irreversibly out of the elections? What if the government accepts the stakes and moves on into the first poll since 1989 in which the opposition abstains?

These questions are becoming very real today as the opposition finds itself held hostage to its putative position that seems to enjoy popular support, but is politically a double edged sword. Who is really to blame and what are the odds for Jordan's democracy?

Our democratic experiment, since many opted to describe it as one, is undergoing a severe test, one which is likely to determine whether this experiment will last or not. The countries of this region, in particular, will be eyeing our performance in the coming few weeks with interest. It was Jordan that launched the new quest for democracy in this part of the world back in the late 1980s and offered itself as a model to be emulated to the countries of the Middle East.

It was Jordan that passed what were considered by observers as liberal legislations promoting free press, pluralism and political parties. It was Jordan that came under fire from repressive regimes in neighboring countries for providing peoples everywhere with a progressive example of how an Arab country can introduce and adopt democratic values and go through the pains of democratic transitions, avoiding the shedding of blood and the persecution of opponents.

It was in Jordan that the Islamists were able to form their own political party, contest the elections and win about a quarter of the seats in the Lower House and even participate in one of the governments.

It was in Jordan that a peace treaty with Israel, as controversial as it is, was adopted by an elected body of deputies representing all shades of the political spectrum.

These important and historic achievements made Jordan a model, a successful and thriving one, for the whole region. Today, Jordanians are not so sure that the experiment is still thriving. Breaking the dialogue means that the experiment is about to come to an end. That's good news for the nervous neighbors and bad oews for all the people of the region. ■

"Hebron now and forever!" Say Bibi's men Another holocaust ahead?



License to kill! Israeli soldiers shooting at Palestinian demonstrators in the Occupied Territories.

By Mark A. Bruzonsky

IT'S MORE and more obvious what the Likud-wing of the Israeli Zionist establishment really wants. Even the grossly distorted imagery of highly co-opted and completely subservient Palestinian nationalism is too much for them. They want to bring even that deception instigated by their Labor-wing to a crash by stripping Arafat of even the illusory hopes he has so sadly, and so corruptly, manipulated to keep his people in line. All the while, of course, "on the ground," Apartheid-like policies have continued to take ever-firmer root making all aspects of life far worse for the Palestinian population than before the "peace process" began.

For the Likudists this imagery of flags and stamps and "police"—even though everything is tightly controlled by Israel with Palestinian towns looking more like reservations by the day—is in itself going too far. Their policies are actually designed to either bring Arafat's "Palestinian Authority" completely to its knees, discredit the PA regime so badly that it collapses onto its many contradictions, or foment a crippling Palestinian civil war. They continually scream against "terrorism," but just as continually they practice their own forms of it while creating the very crucibles that incubate it.

Whatever the Likudists believe that Palestinian nationalism can and should finally be dealt a fatal blow. After all, killing off this nationalist fervor is really what lies behind Israeli policies going way back to Israel's origins.

No matter what soothing words they may sometimes utter, the Laborites as well have no intention of reversing basic Zionist policies now generations old. Rabin was not transformed; he simply saw that with the collapse of the PLO collusion was now possible as well with its carcass, with Arafat himself. It was a Machiavellian opportunity Rabin was finally persuaded would fulfill his public promise (when he was Yitzhak Shamir's Defense Minister in 1988) to "break their bones" and crush the Intifada. These indeed were the goals of Oslo and

one of the central purposes of the post-Gulf War "Peace Process."

After all, the basic policies in place today—that of settlements, that of "separation," that of "autonomy"—all originally came from Labor. Just like the recent "Har Homa" settlement earlier this year, Likud has mostly implemented what Labor has begun; in the case of Har Homa, Netanyahu only doing what Peres himself had promised to do, and did it precisely on Peres' publicly stated schedule. Likud rhetoric is often more harsh and always more direct; but that shouldn't cause serious people to overlook the gross contradiction between Labor's soothing rhetoric and actual policies.

These are the bleak realities facing the Palestinians. The Arabs, and indeed the entire world. These are the bleak realities driving the radicalization of the Arab world, the escalating arms race in the region, and the possibility of nuclear/chemical/biological war in the years ahead.

And this is the context in which the some of the top leaders to Israel have just this week publicly expressed a new slogan purposefully designed to further inflame and infuriate: "HEBRON NOW AND FOREVER!"

Danny Naveh, Cabinet Secretary, David Bar-Ilan, Director of Policy Planning and government spokesman, and Uzi Arad, Foreign Policy Advisor to the Prime Minister (and incidentally my old classmate at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton), have jointly just come forward to publicly adopt this slogan as their own. Clearly they could not have done so without the Prime Minister's personal knowledge and blessing.

This triumvirate is not only working to make any future "final settlement" between Israelis and Palestinians impossible, but to symbolically divide Jews and Arabs behind hostile barricades even within the historic city of Hebron. Despite the duplicitous American-arranged deal earlier this year, the Israeli army still occupies Hebron and most importantly still controls all means of coming and going to the city.

How tragic that the very city of Abra-

ham, and the very site where the biblical father of both peoples is buried, is being so manipulated and so violated not just by fanatical settlers, but by the most senior leaders of Israel.

It is a terrible historical travesty that the Zionist movement has brought and whose future ramifications loom ominously. It will certainly lead to more bloodshed, more repression, and then much more bloodshed in a cycle that now feeds on itself. The hatreds created today will have their reverberations in the years still ahead.

And somewhere, down the historical road ahead all this could still lead to annihilation. For the outlines of a possible new holocaust can already be seen on history's horizon. And if this outline begins to take more definite shape it could be leading to another major cataclysm for the Jewish people, as well as the Palestinians and maybe the entire region. Pulitzer prize-winning author, Seymour Hersh, wrote *The Sampson Complex* about Israel's nuclear weapons program some years ago. It's even more relevant today than it was then.

Ironically, should this possible dark future develop in the years ahead—and some of the most astute and independent analysts are beginning to predict just this—it will have been nurtured by a fervent Jewish extremism. And yes, it should be said, also by a peculiar Zionist form of racism whose destructive psychological roots can be found in the European holocaust of the past—that one perpetrated by Christian Europe while Jews were living peacefully in Muslim countries. ■

Mark Bruzonsky is Publisher of MID-EAST REALITIES and former Washington representative of the World Jewish Congress. His edited books about the Middle East have been published by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars at the Smithsonian, Congressional Quarterly, and National Geographic (film). Bruzonsky produces the weekly TV program MID-EAST REALITIES and has visited the Middle East region over 150 times.

Book review

A heartfelt look at mankind

By Peter Aspin

THROUGHOUT ITS modern political history, western society has championed the strictures of cool, dispassionate argument over the heated engagement of the emotionally committed. The virtues of detachment are taken for granted: how else to settle warring claims? What better way to extricate ourselves from the distorting pressure of the moment than to step back into the comforting realm of objectivity?

But the authors of *Disclosing New Worlds* claim we are losing something by systematically allowing our heads to rule our hearts. It turns us into control freaks, constantly seeking explanation and demanding rational analysis when, occasionally, the situation demands otherwise. In a period of rapid change, for instance, some events defy such analysis, because the very definition of what counts as hard "facts" is changing before us. "Consequently," say the authors, "we find in the halls of business and of politics many people living in a state of profound resignation. They feel themselves losing touch with the world, and after failing to develop analytical explanations of ever-new domains, they begin building protected niches for themselves."

In sharp contrast and running parallel to this attitude, which the authors label as modernist, is the post-modernist view of the world: all change is good, to be enjoyed, embraced and accepted as part of the human condition. But this will not do either: if we regard our sense of selfhood as some nostalgic irrelevance, how do we make any kind of commitment, to workplace, friend or loved one? *Disclosing New Worlds* is an attempt to solve this dilemma: how do we overcome our intel-

lectual addiction to detachment and convince ourselves that we can still change the world, and how do we rediscover our history-making skills amid the ever-mutating world all around?

The authors' argument is ambitious, densely-argued and unashamedly complex. They focus on three archetypal figures who can deliver us from our impasse: the entrepreneur, the virtuous citizen and the "culture figure," who can cultivate solidarity among a community.

All three figures have in common an ability to grasp intuitively what is not always available to rational thinkers. In the first case, the authors analyse the ability of King C. Gillette, inventor of the safety razor, to revolutionise the way men regarded an essential masculine ritual.

This was no random fluke, but a historically sensitive insight which would forever affect our culture. "Gillette sensed that masculinity could be understood as commanding things and getting rid of them when they ceased to serve, rather than as caring for and cherishing useful and well-engineered things."

In the second case, Spinoza, Flores and Dreyfus endorse the virtue of civic activism by looking at the case of the Mothers Against Drunk Driving movement in the US. They contend that it is the very participation in such a movement that is as important (if not more) than the substance of its argument. Traditional liberalism, they say, promotes an aloof resignation by its emphasis on abstract reasoning and private judgment. "But a reflective judgment does not amount to a change of heart."

Luther King was an exemplary articulator for his cause "because his actions reminded

Americans of a concern that was an essential part of their past and thus of their identity." Through such expressions of shared cultural values are people made aware of their heritage, and thus able to resist the creeping trend of anonymity and consequent feeling of helplessness.

It is refreshing, amid the gloomy talk of end of history and death of ideology, to find a book prepared to revise the traditional liberal agenda with

such thoroughness, if not style. The difficulty of *Disclosing New Worlds* will preclude it from making any great impact; but it stands as a brave attempt to reformulate the relationship between democratic rights and economic progress in an age when the triumphalism of technological advance masks an unconfident vision of the future. ■

Financial Times Syndication



YASSER ARAFAT: Captured in an economic crunch

Middle East East Region Crossfire

ONCE AGAIN, the Lebanese-Israeli border, the death toll is rising, mainly on the Lebanese side. It would not be true to say that the area was peaceful before, but what we are witnessing is a deliberate escalation in violence, that is accompanied by belligerent statements from politicians on all sides.

We are back to a war situation, drifting slowly towards the pre-Machrek conditions. Accusations and counter-accusations are flying to pin the blame on one side or the other. But it is crucial to contain the situation, before we are faced with a warfare outbreak once again.

Security and occupation are intertwined in this scenario just as they are with the PNA and Israel. The only difference is the question of will to reach an accommodation, which varies in both cases, and at times is dependent on the outcome of progress in negotiations.

The sad sight of Lebanese families leaving their villages, describing their towns in anticipation of more violence, is certainly a frightening prospect. The inhabitants of the vulnerable areas are the ones most accustomed to the prospect of the volatile atmosphere. If we are to go by their instinct then it is most likely that we are about to see more bloodshed. Such indications do not come from the Lebanese side alone, as the Israelis have also started the "early closure" and evacuation of holiday villages close to the potential conflict areas across the border. Either there will be some major military operations in the area, or that the crossfire is expected to continue for some time, squeezing and embarrasing the Lebanese government, and provoking the Syrians.

Mr. Netanyahu is confident that his actions will have the support of the Israeli public for they fall under the category of defending northern Israel. But for Hizbullah and its allies, the situation is clear cut. They are fighting occupation and retaliating because of the deaths of Lebanese civilians, and the destruction of their villages.

This is the case, at least superficially. The history of the conflict, especially in this area, acquires dimensions that are not all apparent. This is particularly so when one considers the escalation of violence at times, in relation to the developments of events on the larger regional scale. There is a clear indication from the Lebanese side of the border, that the matter of security of the Israeli settlements will not take priority over occupation, and the paradigm of PNA-Israel security cooperation, will not be the best case scenario for the promotion of understanding between the antagonistic parties.

It is apparent that any movement on the Palestinian-Israeli track, may effect the Lebanese arena. This contradictory imbalance on the two tracks of relations will undoubtedly continue until a uniform agenda for all can be reached, with peace at its center.

Another important factor, which we have started getting used to in this context, is the escalation in confrontation, and raising the tempo once an American high office visits or attempts to visit the region. The history of such visits has usually been preceded by a major fireworks display across the Lebanese-Israeli border. Such actions aim at attracting US attention to the lack of developments in political talks between the respective parties, and to show in no uncertain terms, that without the consideration of the Lebanese-Israeli, and Syrian-Israeli tracks, chances for a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict cannot be reached. Nevertheless, isn't there perhaps another way of doing it, without the loss of more innocent lives on all sides? ■

Business scene

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Foreign Exchan

	Per Jn
US\$	0.7080
£	1.1510
DM	0.4120
SFr	0.4801
FRF	0.1220
YEN (100)	0.5624
DEL	0.3467
LIT (100)	0.0419

SATURDAY

■ Jordan...
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■ Arab...

■ National...
■ National...
■ National...

■ General...
■ General...
■ General...

■ Highest...
■ Highest...
■ Highest...

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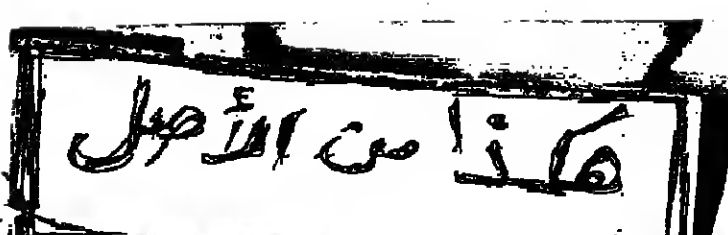
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28 AUGUST 1997

B U S I N E S S

THE STAR 5 5

Business scene

The World Bank approved a loan agreement worth \$30 million to finance a multi-purpose program to improve infrastructure in rural areas in Jordan. The project is expected to provide social and health services to the underprivileged areas and create employment. This is a three-year experimental project that seeks to provide long-term sustainable development in rural areas. The loan given to finance the project is over 17 years with a grace period of four years.

The Jordan Export Association (JEA) is busy preparing for its participation in a Jordanian products expo to be held in Khartoum, Sudan. It is the second of its kind. The first was held in 1995. The expo which is held between 22-26 October aims to promote Jordanian commodities in Sudan. This is in addition to fostering trade exchange between Jordanian businessmen and their Sudanese counterparts. JEA is co-operating with the Jordan Exports Development and Commercial Centres (JEDCCO) to make the show a success. Jordan's exports to Sudan last year reached JD 10.7 million while Jordan imported JD14.6 million worth of products from that country. Till last May of this year, Jordanian exports to Sudan were JD4.9 million while imports stood at JD8.4 million. Jordan exports cement, pharmaceuticals, paints, paper, plastic, potash and tomato paste to Sudan while it imports sesame and meat.

Foreign currency assets in local banks, that is besides the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ), recorded an increase of JD 4.410 billion during the first half of this year until last June. This is compared with JD 4.271 billion recorded by the end of last year, a rise of JD 139 million. CBJ stake of these assets totalled JD 2,194,200,000 against JD 69,700,000 last year. Foreign liabilities for the Jordanian banking system, at the same time, were JD 2,223,200,000, JD325 million of which are liabilities from the CBJ.

The latest adjustments to the foreign investment ceiling in Jordan has borne fruits faster than expected. Arab investors, mainly from the Gulf are enthusiastic for investing in Jordan. A group of Arab investors recently bought 21,000 shares of the Arab Bank at a total value of JD 6 million. Many Arab investors have participated in the financial increase of some other banks in Jordan.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 27 August

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US\$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
SFR	0.4801	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1233
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
DEL	0.3667	0.3685
LIT (100)	0.0419	0.0421

Local mineral water bottlers say allowing imports will close their factories

By Iham Sadiq
Star Staff Writer

THE GOVERNMENT'S intention to lift an embargo on the import of foreign mineral water by the end of the year may spell the end of the thriving local bottling industry, according to producers.

Last week, minister of Industry and Trade Dr Hani Al Mulqi said that the decision to allow import of mineral water from Arab and foreign countries will be taken by the end of this year. During a two-hour meeting with members from Amman Chamber of Industry, Al Mulqi stressed that local mineral water producers have the opportunity now to improve their product and restructure their cost.

However, Jordanian bottlers have expressed fears about the government's intention to open the local market for imported mineral water. They warned that if such a decision is enforced it will spell the end of their business. Sources said that the government has asked local mineral water producers to cut their prices, or it will give the green light to allow the import of this material. They described such approach as a form of arm-twisting which threatens the national industry.

But Al Mulqi gave assurances that the government has put the interest of the national economy into consideration. The margin of profit for local producers will be between 60 to 100 fls, he said. He added that

the price of imported mineral water will be higher than local ones after customs fees are added.

But local bottlers say their prices are already the cheapest in the region and they stress that their profit is marginal. They argue that it is the retailers, groceries or supermarkets, who make the real profit.

They said the decade-old embargo on importing mineral water should not be lifted.

Engineer Ramzi Hadeethah, director of Mashour Hadeethah and Partners Co. (Ghadir) told The Star, "We appeal to the prime minister to understand our position and put into consideration the support we need to continue to exist as part of the emerging Jordanian industry."

He added that the five local bottling factories—two more under construction—are able to meet the basic industrial and health requirements and specifications. Mr Hadeethah said local production enjoys high quality at an affordable price. He sees no reason at this point to open up the Jordanian market for foreign imports of mineral water. "Definitely importing mineral water will lead to closure of local factories," he said.

At present existing mineral water factories are said to be operating at one fourth of their production capacity due to the small size of the market and low demand.

"Our profit margins are very low, and they can't be compared with Arab or foreign products," Hadeethah

said. "There are about 50 factories in the Arabian Gulf states, so they can compete in the local market due to their low production costs," he added.

Available statistics reveal that the volume of investments in local mineral water factories exceeded JD 12 million, mostly financed by loans from commercial banks. This means that most of these ventures have to worry about repaying interest on their loans while developing their production lines at the same time.

Local bottlers argue that many Arab producers also enjoy protection from their governments like in Syria, where the government extends subsidies to local bottlers so they can export their products.

Mr Hadeethah said mineral water produced in Jordan is no different from other good produced in the country. "It is a totally local product, as all production inputs including the plastic bottle and the packing material are locally made and this saves hard currency and helps to employ local labor," he said.

Another investor in this sector called on the govern-



Al Wir



Hadeethah

ment to maintain its embargo against importing mineral water. He said competition from outside producers will be unfair.

Engineer Thabit Al Wir, director of National Springs Water (Al Sabeel), told The Star that "mineral water in Jordan is one of the natural resources such as phosphate, cement and potash and therefore it must be protected."

"Our prices cannot compete with those of foreign bottlers," he said. "For example Saudi Arabian water will be cheaper because production is less costly."

Al Wir added that local producers contribute to the "quality tax" collected by the government that they pay 20 fls per each liter.

Local producers say if the government allows foreign imports it will be sending the wrong message to investors who put millions of dinars in

such projects and will be facing losses and closures. They point that such closures will also affect unemployment at all levels.

Engineer Ramzi Hadeethah said "out industry helps to revive the transport sector which is currently in a recession. We hire cars and trucks to carry our products from the factory to retailers all over the country."

Both Mr Hadeethah and Al Wir say the issue is still being negotiated between local firms and the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Producers provided the ministry with a detailed scientific study on the production costs together with a full data on their marginal profit. The ministry promised to give serious consideration to the position of the mineral water producers in Jordan.

Household furniture in Amman gets an uplift with Golden Ideas

By a Star Staff Writer

"WHAT IS this. Another furniture place." Yes, but this is no ordinary showroom, the furniture represents elegance and style. 'Golden Ideas' is designed to project an aura of excitement.

As you walk into the showroom in Al Shmeisani, you are immediately struck by the different mirrors, glass and brass that await you. In fact, this is what Golden Ideas is all about: the design and production of oriental furniture is based on these three elements. The effect is simply stunning.

The showroom has everything you want of household furniture from tables, chairs, cabinets and cupboards to TV stands, wardrobes, dressing tables bedrooms, side tables and coffee tables. There are even trunks which come in different sizes. Glossed over in mirrors that are neatly cut all over the cover of the box, the effect is glaring.

The owner of the showroom, Khalil Darwazeh tells The Star that the aim is not only to be as diverse but as distinctive as possible, to bring out that special touch in furniture design.

This is found in the final neat finishing of the products that are on display. "This kind of work requires a lot of skill because you are dealing with mirrors, glass and brass, as you can see on this table for instance," he adds, showing a large desk that was consum-



Darwazeh

mately designed for the businessman. The brass is carefully placed on the sides of the desk to give it a decorative flavor. "This requires very delicate handling because any wrong move from the workman could break the expensive glass" which is imported from France. "What we do is a craft."

Mr Darwazeh continues, "everything you see around you is manufactured by our factory in Sehab. We make everything, from start to finish." The factory has 62 skilled workers, some are local, but there are craftsmen from Armenia, Egypt and the Philippines. This is in addition to the administrative staff.

Because of the expertise that is involved in this kind of work, Mr Darwazeh provides



Enter the world of elegance

an after sales maintenance service to keep the furniture's original elegance. He has four workshops for this.

The 37-year-old entrepreneur is well pleased with himself. His factory in Sehab was only opened two years ago, and together with his showroom, he says business is booming. He says a lot of people go for these kind of designs, expanding with his hand to show what's in the showroom. Already, he exports to Israel, USA, the United Arab Emirates and

Saudi Arabia, having sales agents in all these countries.

"Besides this, many tourists come to my showroom and say, 'I want you to ship me that piece or this piece.'" His factory also makes different color drapes, which are lavishly displayed in the sides of the showroom, and cover quilts.

Handing me a catalogue, he says that they can make any design you favor, right up to the last detail. "Just say the word," Darwazeh is proud of what he does, saying "nobody can imitate my work with the same quality and design."

Virgin's cosy stance stifles competition

BRITISH AIRWAYS has accused Virgin Atlantic Airways of stifling airline competition across the North Atlantic by continuing to oppose its alliance with American Airlines.

The broadside was fired across the Virgin bows by Bob Ayling, British Airways chief executive following meeting with a group of visiting US Congressmen, members of the House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Mr Ayling claimed Richard Branson's airline is "afraid of new competition."

Government approval of the alliance will only be granted if all UK airports, including London Heathrow, are opened to all US airlines. Access to Heathrow is currently restricted to two carriers from the USA—American and United Airlines.

Mr Ayling said: "Virgin wants to maintain its cosy position at Heathrow with access denied to airlines such as Continental, US Airways, Delta, TWA and Northwest. The entry of these airlines will see an inevitable fall in air fares from Heathrow to the USA as competition for business increase but it appears that Virgin is afraid of increased competition."

Bob Ayling addressed also the issue of slots at Heathrow, the time allotted for aircraft arrivals and departures at busy airports. He said: "There is no doubt that slots at Heathrow are much in demand but the argument put forward by Virgin and other competitors to our planned alliance that there are no slots does not rally with reality."

Business Chronicle

Edited by Bilal Hajawi

IPC develops new investment strategy

THE INVESTMENT Promotion Corp. (IPC) is embarking on a new strategy to encourage investments in the Kingdom. This is in cooperation with the International Organization for Investment Services which is affiliated to the World Bank.

Since it is a must to enlarge the awareness of those concerned in investment promotion to create an attractive climate, a workshop was organized last week at the IPC.

Among the participants were the Industrial Estate Corp., the Free Zones Corp., the Jordan Valley Authority and the Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centres (JEDCCO).

"It is essential to create an attractive environment for local, Arab and foreign investments and to bridge a common ground to deal with investors in a clear and unified manner in all institutions concerned in the country," said Dr Muntasar Oqla, IPC general director.

Dr Oqla stressed the importance of direct contact with investors to see their problems and solve them in a transparent way, and to secure support for their projects.

Available statistics on investments after the new Investment Promotion Law No. 16 of 1995 reveal that they recorded a 33 percent growth rate to reach JD 368 million, 20 percent of these investments were foreign.

The IPC is seeking to promote Jordan through having a site on the Internet.

The corporation gives much concern to simplifying and following-up procedures for investors, particularly those linked to exemptions stipulated in the investment promotion law.

Participants in the workshop stressed the need to exchange data and co-operate with investors to face routine procedures in certain institutions.

The government has lately embarked on some economic measures to attract capital flow and push forward the process to liberalize the economy.

Analysts see the step to remove the ceiling for foreign ownership in shares of companies registered on the Amman Financial Market (AFM), as a prudent step that comes in the framework of the whole economic reform program, launched in Jordan in 1989.

This resolution which will be effective by the next month, excludes foreign stakes in construction, contracting and mining.

Some analysts say that the country has to move faster on the privatization process to attract more foreign investments.

Investors, mainly foreign, compare the bold measures and legislations followed by Egypt with those followed in Jordan. They claim that our economic legislations are moving slowly. Added to this, they say there are still doubts about the so-called promising investment opportunities in the Kingdom.

But those analysts argue that investment funds are looking forward to speeding up the process of privatization, and that the removal of restrictions on foreign ownership in Jordanian shares should have come much earlier.

Total purchases of international investment funds over the last seven months were about \$50 million, which is unprecedented. Some economic experts say this is only the beginning and are optimistic that such amounts will increase in the light of rising the ceiling of foreign ownership, says Ziyad Al Basha, director of the British Bank in Jordan.

"We shall see an increase in (foreign) purchases and the investment funds are going to reassess their stance towards Jordan and will soon buy shares of the Arab Bank."

August sleepy? Not this time around

By John Authers

DEALERS SEEM to have done without a summer holiday this year. August is usually a quiet month on Wall Street. Whenever there are sharp swings in the market, they tend to be generated by technical factors, with few shares changing hands.

Dealing rooms are understaffed, while those that remain have at least half their minds in Cape Cod. Traders generally follow any lead they are offered, with the result that small moves in a stock often can be magnified into more drastic changes in share prices on a low volume of shares being traded.

Could this explain Wall Street's severe turbulence of the past month?

Starting on Friday last week, the Dow Jones Industrial Average logged five successive trading days in which it moved by 100 points or more, the first time this has happened. Within half an hour of opening, Monday, it had shed another 100 points, although it later began to claw back some of the losses.

While it is misleading to look at a points move in isolation, the 347.37-point fall on Friday last week demanded to be taken seriously. Even in percentage terms, it was the sharpest daily reverse the index had seen since 1991, at 3.21 percent. Yet, on the first three days of this week, the cumulative gain was 4.24 percent again a significant move.

More peculiarly, the fluctuations cannot be explained by thin volume. By 15 August, the day the market took its sharpest fall, the total number of shares traded in Standard & Poor's 500 stocks for the month had reached 5.48 billion already, according to S&P.

This means volume is on course to be double its normal level for the sleepiest month of the year. Last year, only 6.13 billion shares changed hands during the whole month, while the figure in 1995 was 6.12 billion.

So, these swings have been caused by real buying and selling. There are strong factions in Wall Street who are nervous that a serious correction is in the offing. But there are almost equal numbers (to judge by the way the recent shifts have matched each other) who believe they have missed out and are taking any opportunities to buy stock when it is momentarily cheaper.

The general investing public seems less concerned. Vanguard, the nation's biggest seller of mutual funds at present thanks in large part to the popu-

larity of those which simply mirror market indices reported that new investments have continued to exceed redemptions every day this month. The biggest hiccup came last Friday when new investments increased sharply as private investors attempted to buy on the dip.

Even in the dog days of summer, small investors were not prepared to follow Wall Street's lead.

There is one leader, however, who traders will follow wherever he goes. Warren Buffett, the world's greatest investor and its second richest man, has a loyal if not fanatical following. Any fresh news about the portfolio held by Berkshire Hathaway, his investment vehicle, causes ripples on the market.

This week saw one of the most extreme reactions ever. His latest filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission a document which all investment managers must lodge quarterly had no mention of several of the companies in which he holds large stakes.

Francisco bank which has championed both ruthless cost-cutting and on-line commerce. At the beginning of the year, Buffett had held an 8 percent stake worth more than \$2 billion.

As his loyal followers know, he buys stock for the long term. But Wells Fargo has had an awful year, twice warning the market that it had failed to hold on to as many customers of its latest acquisition, the Los Angeles-based First Interstate, as it had hoped.

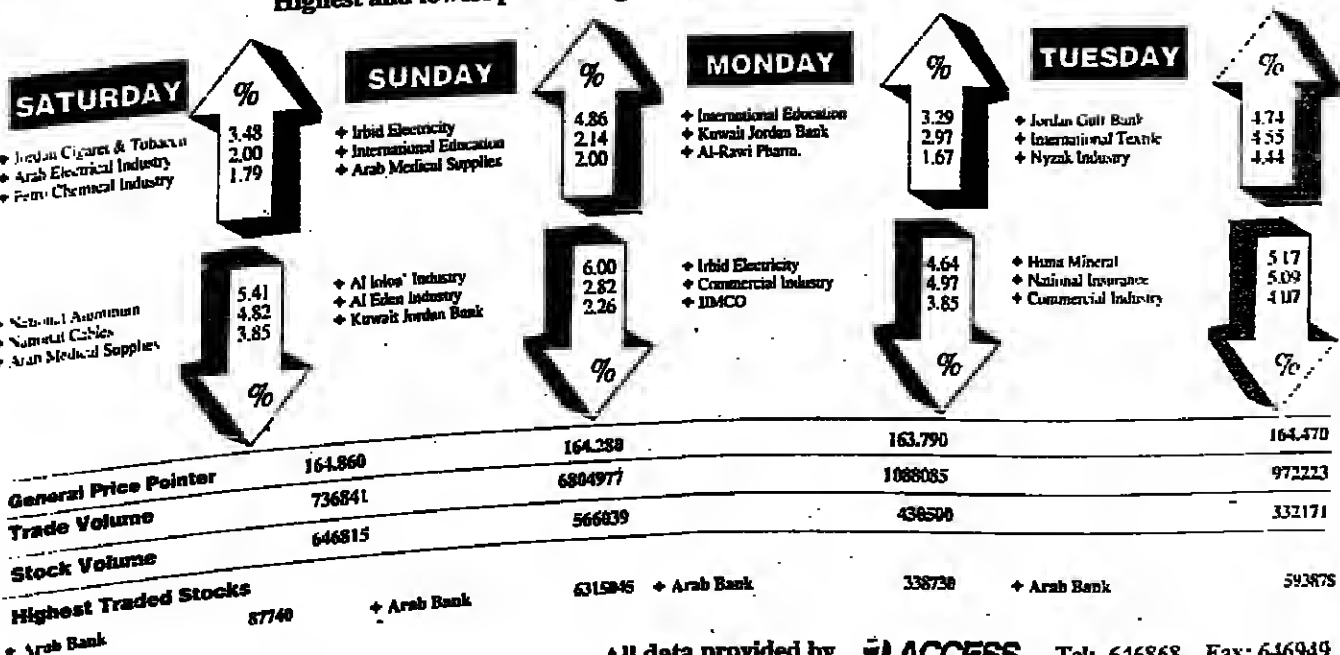
It was just conceivable that Buffett had taken his profits and run. The result: pandemonium. When wire services broke the news, the bank's stock tumbled from \$266 to \$251 in less than an hour. Then the bank published a statement saying that Buffett still held a "substantial" stake in the company.

Traders had forgotten that Buffett, like many other institutional investors, has negotiated partial exemption from regulators' reporting rules. If a holding reflects a proprietary trading strategy, he can keep quiet about it for 15 months. So, Wells Fargo's non-appearance on his filing involved nothing and the bank bounced back a little.

But the episode, which was accompanied by heavy block selling, underlined that the market is not conforming to its normal rules and that many traders are expecting bad news, even if their concerns are not matched by the public.

MARKET WATCH 23-26 August

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market



Higher education eludes generation of Afghan girls

By Rone Tempest

DIR, Pakistan—“My name is Zeba,” the girl in the long white shawl and sky-blue school uniform announced boldly in English, “and my father is Fazel Mohammed.”

Zeba, 12, can rattle off her ABCs, read and write in her native Pushtu language and solve multiplication and division problems. She is ready—bubbling with eagerness—to advance to middle school and beyond.

“I’d like at least to go until the 12th grade,” she said hopefully in the primitive three-room schoolhouse where she has emerged as a top student.

But at the Berari refugee camp where the Afghan girl lives in Pakistan, there is no middle school for girls—or boys, for that matter. No high school. No beyond. This poses a major question, possibly critical for the future of Afghanistan: If Zeba, daughter of Fazel Mohammed, is not educated, who will be?

Zeba and other Afghan girls her age are in a bind because inside Afghanistan, the Muslim fundamentalist Taliban movement has closed all schools for girls and women. Meanwhile, in the Pakistan refugee camps where an estimated 1.2 million to 1.8 million Afghans still live, education beyond the sixth grade has been halted because of severe budget cuts in international aid for the refugees.

The problem in Pakistan is not fundamentalism but lack of money—what one concerned UN official described as “donor fatigue.”

For Afghan girls, the results are particularly troubling. Oppressed in their homeland and abandoned by the international aid community in exile, a generation of Afghan girls finds itself blocked from higher education.

The tragic irony is that education has never been so sorely needed nor so much in demand in a culture—primarily ethnic Pushtun—that traditionally has resisted

female schooling. “The refugee camps may be the last or only remaining organized, encouraged education of women in the Afghan community,” said UN refugee official Maria Juarez.

Juarez and other aid officials are hoping that the international aid community will begin to view the education of Afghan children in Pakistan as a special priority separate from the question of overall support for the greater refugee population.

Malang Eborhimi, an Afghan refugee who works in the camps as a UN social worker, observed: “In Pakistan, we still have the possibility to educate our girls. No one knows when that opportunity will return in Afghanistan.”

Adina Asfandiar, 25, a primary school teacher in the Berari camp who four years ago fled Kabul, the Afghan capital, sees education of the young refugee girls as a mission to save her country.

“Someday, when peace returns to Afghanistan,” said the Kabul University graduate, pointing to the clump of 11- and 12-year-old girls sitting attentively on the dirt floor of her crowded classroom. “These children will be the seeds for the rebuilding of our country.”

Among those in the class recently were eight girls, including Zeba, who are repeating the sixth grade because they have no school and no books for the next level. The primary school teachers sometimes ask them to help tutor the younger girls.

The older girls have dreams of becoming teachers and health workers.

The main cause of the problem is that the rise to power of the Taliban in Afghanistan came as money-strapped UN and Pakistani agencies were withdrawing support for Afghan refugees.

“It’s really a case of general donor fatigue,” said Jacques Mouchet, the senior official in the region for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. “The world media attention is no longer on Afghanistan. Financing has

become more and more difficult. Non-governmental agencies are closing down right and left.”

Hoping to encourage Afghans to return home, the UN refugee agency cut off all direct food aid in 1995 after the number of Afghans in Pakistan began to fall from a high of 4 million in 1988 during the Afghan War. Most are concentrated here in Pakistan’s rugged North-West Frontier province. Included in the census of refugees are an estimated 400,000 recent arrivals who fled the militant orthodoxy that the Taliban has installed in the territory it controls, roughly two-thirds of Afghanistan.

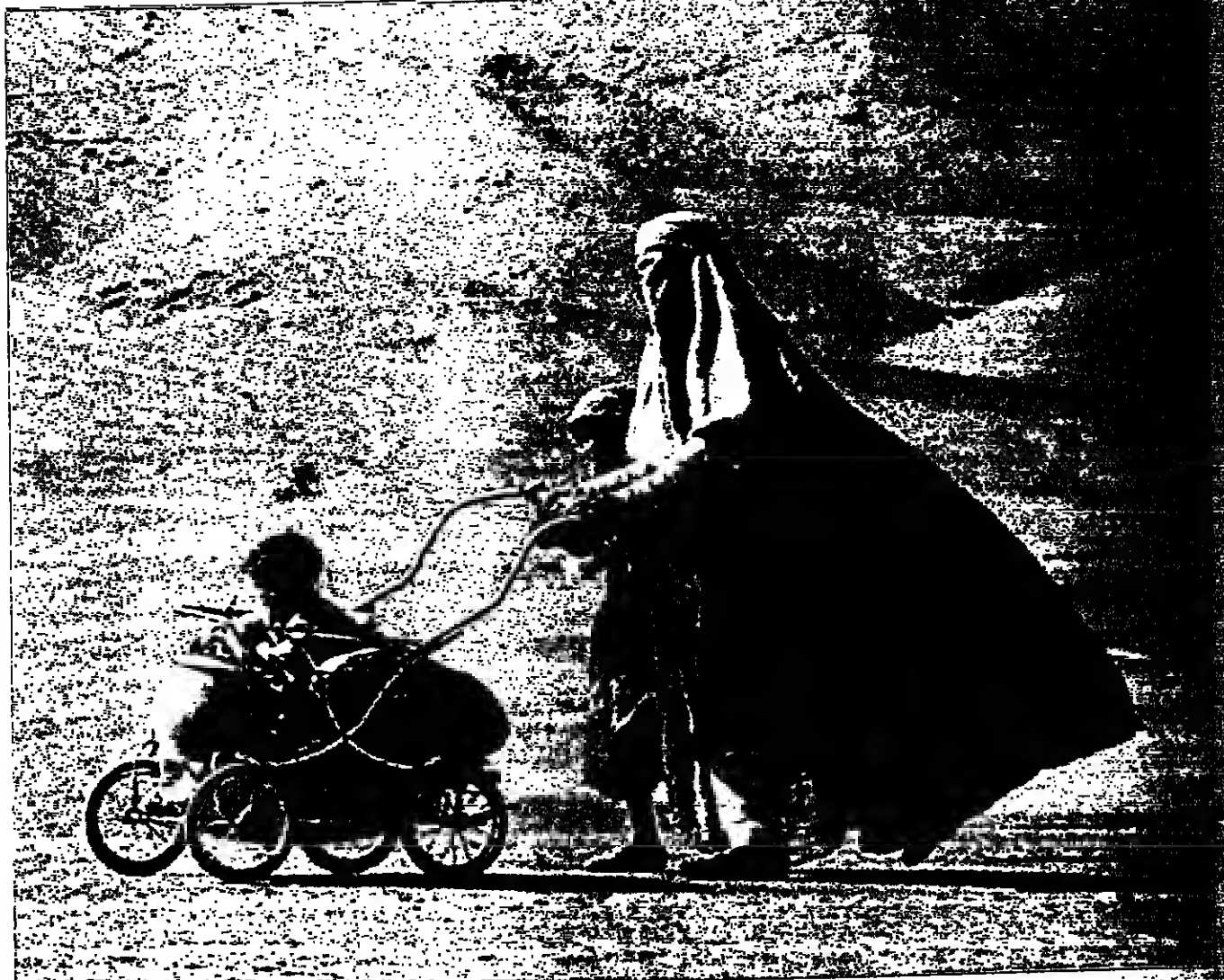
Even in areas not under direct control of the Taliban—such as Mazar-i-Sharif, a major agricultural area in northern Afghanistan—education of female students has come under attack. Recently, the main university in Mazar-i-Sharif, previously co-ed, was divided into male and female sections. Most classes for women were reportedly canceled.

Under a special “safety net” program, the UN refugee agency has been able to provide food and health care to needy cases in the Pakistan camps. In most of the camps, the United Nations still supports primary schools for boys and girls. But almost all middle and high schools in the 140 refugee camps have been closed because of funding cutbacks.

Some refugee boys, who are freer to travel in the restrictive Afghan culture, have been able to continue their education in Pakistani or private schools.

In Peshawar, the capital of North-West Frontier province, private groups have been able to keep alive a handful of secondary schools for girls, including one high school. In Iran, despite the conservative religious regime, Afghan refugee girls are still receiving basic education.

But the problem of education for women and girls is most acute in remote areas of Pakistan where most of the remaining refugees are housed. Accord-



On the road: Afghan women continue to face hardships under the Taliban regime which has curtailed their education.

ing to the latest estimates, only about 4,000 Afghan refugee girls are receiving education, compared to more than 35,000 boys.

Aid groups are hoping that the crisis will prompt a new kind of donor support, different from that given to refugees when the country’s “mujahedeen” forces were battling Soviet troops during the 1980s. Ironically, the problem emerges as demand for educational opportunities for girls has never been higher.

“When the refugees first came to Pakistan after the 1979-80 Soviet invasion, education was anathema,” said Nancy Dupree, a US expert on Afghanistan who directs a research center in Peshawar. “The refugees were mainly a rural population. They looked upon education as the road on which communism came to Afghanistan.”

But the refugee attitude toward the education of women and girls appears to

have softened. At the time of the Soviet invasion, only 3 percent of Afghanistan’s adult women had a basic education. Nearly two decades of war have probably lowered that rate.

But because it is so low, educating enough refugee girls in Pakistan and Iran could improve the prewar record.

Another factor contributing to the growth of support for schooling in the Afghan refugee communities is an incentive program operated by the UN World Food Program that every month distributes a gallon can of cooking oil for each girl in the family who enrolls in school.

Beyond the broad need to foster an educated generation prepared to tackle Afghanistan’s challenges, food program sponsors see many practical long-term benefits from such incentives. Studies have consistently shown that educated women marry later, have fewer children, practice better nutrition and encourage their own children to become educated.

Since the incentive program was instituted in the Berari camp, located on a rocky slope only a few miles from the Afghan border, the female population of the school has increased from 76 to 147 students in less than two years.

Finally, that the Taliban, a rural-based all-male militia, has curtailed education for women and girls back home has caused Afghan refugees to reassess traditional attitudes. In the refugee camps, elders talk of the hypocritical Taliban leaders who ban education for girls inside Afghanistan but send their own daughters to Peshawar to school.

“Enthusiasm for girls’ education has never been higher here,” Dupree said. “The refugees have been exposed to the benefits. They can see that education is not the road to communism.”

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Central Asia abuzz in religion, politics, trade

By Susan Sachs

BAKU, Azerbaijan—Every evening, people escape their hot, cramped apartments and stroll the wide boardwalk along the Caspian Sea, breathing in the smell of crude oil, backfiring Soviet-made cars and grilled shish kebabs with the tepid summer air.

Giggling Russian girls in miniskirts and stiletto heels

point at the Iranian women in toe-length overcoats and tightly fitted scarves who shuffle behind their husbands. Laughing Azeri families, dressed in the ubiquitous rayon dresses and printed polyester shirts sold in all the caw Turkish shops downtown, share warm bottles of Coca-Cola.

When the Soviet Union was

alive, Azerbaijan was one of the most sequestered places in

the world. Like the other frontline Muslim republics ranged along the Communist empire’s southern flank, it formed an impenetrable barrier against the outside world. Foreigners could not look in. Insiders dared not look out.

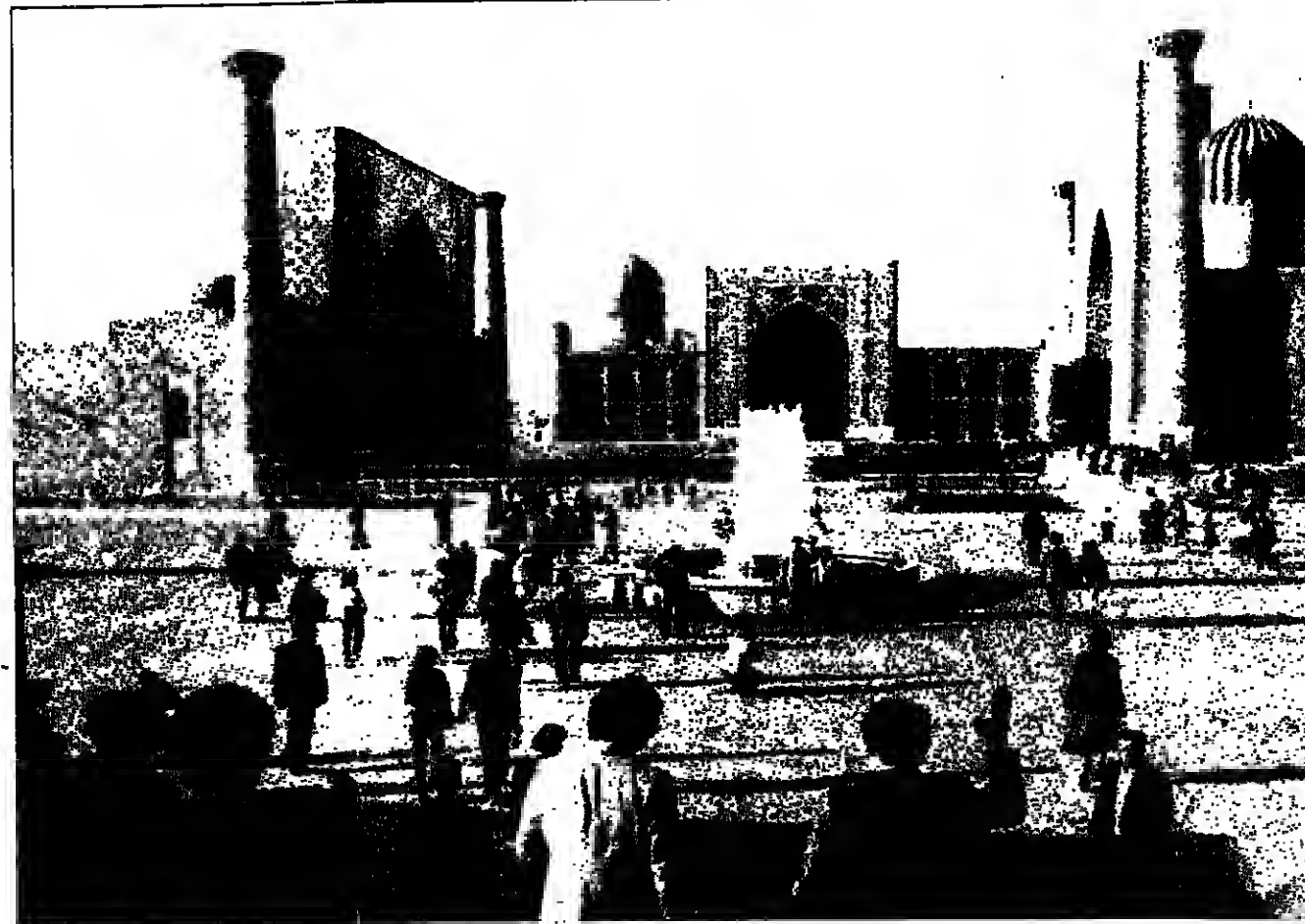
But Central Asia and the Caucasus have awakened like Rip van Winkle. History shook the kaleidoscope and rearranged the cultural, economic and diplomatic pieces.

And while most ordinary people still wait to be delivered from lives of poverty and political corruption, their once-closed nations are under brisk assault from the outside world and its money, Islamic politics and diplomatic intrigues.

The scene on the Baku boardwalk is repeated throughout the region, where city streets buzz with American oilmen, Turkish religious teachers, Iranian traders, Pakistani military advisers, European bankers and Russian spies. For some of these outsiders, especially US and European oil companies, the prize is the enormous mineral wealth lying under the Caspian Sea and in the vast desert wastes that stretch across much of Central Asia.

Estimates vary, but experts generally agree that Caspian basin energy reserves rival, at the very least, those of the volatile Arabian Gulf and the storm-cursed North Sea. Gas reserves, principally in the desert of sparsely populated Turkmenistan, are the third-largest in the world.

For others, the prize is renewed political and religious influence in an area that, by virtue of geography, is one of the world’s oldest trade crossroads. Turkey, for instance, regards the region as its linguistic and ethnic backyard. Thanks to a thousand years of attack and conquest, people are mostly Turkic-speaking. Religious traditions, both in the permissive



Samarkand could today represent the challenge between traditionalism and modernity facing the Central Asian Republics.

mainstream Islam and in the mystic Muslim Sufi brotherhoods that flourished throughout the area for centuries, have Turkish roots.

The modern Turkish model of relations between religion and state subordinates Islam to secular power. That appeals to the region’s strongman rulers, and most have welcomed efforts by the Turkish Diyanet, or state religious ministry, to open spacious new mosques, schools and Islamic institutes, and to sponsor training of hundreds of would-be imams.

For all its good intentions, however, the Turkish government has been unable to match the buying power of private Turkish religious groups that have a more zealous and decidedly more conservative view of Islam. Although under fire from secularists at home, they have found a niche in the old Soviet republics, where public education has collapsed for lack of money.

These religious foundations have opened dozens of low-cost private high schools throughout the region that not only offer a heavy dollop of Islamic studies, but actively discourage such secular teenage pursuits as dancing and music.

The West, the United States in particular, encourages Turkey’s ambitions to bring the newly independent Muslim states into its orbit and reduce their dependency on Russian trade, transit routes and military might.

But tugging from the south is also Iran, which claims its own privileged cultural and political role in the region.

Just as its power to export

fundamentalism to the Middle East was waning and US economic sanctions began to bite, Iran saw its entire northern border suddenly opened to a new world of opportunities for propaganda and trade with its Muslim neighbors of the former Soviet Union.

In the political sphere, Iran first focused on the mountainous little nation of Tajikistan, which has a substantial Shiite Muslim minority and speaks a variant of the Persian language. Farsi, Iran set itself up first as a sponsor of the Tajik Islamic opposition movement there and then, after a few years of civil war fueled by clan conflict and fundamentalism, positioned itself as a peace broker.

But there are built-in frustrations to Iranian aspirations in the region, especially in next-door Azerbaijan. Iran is home to 21 million ethnic Azeris—three times the number in oil-rich and free-wheeling Azerbaijan itself. That’s a statistic that makes officials on both sides of the border nervous.

Iran is concerned that the Azeri’s rather loose Islam will infect their brethren across the border or that independent Azerbaijan will become a mag-

net,” said a Western diplomat in Baku, speaking on condition of anonymity. “The Azeris fear an infiltration of Islamic fundamentalism.”

Indeed, Islam, long suppressed by the Soviet regime, is being revived in the region as a convenient symbol of rejuvenated national identity. But the controls are Soviet-style: Only those Muslim prayer leaders and teachers who pay obedience to the ruling regimes are allowed to operate without harassment in most countries, leaving more radical Islamic groups to ferment dangerously underground.

In some countries, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan for example, Islamic activists have been jailed by the dozen. The leaders justify their hard line by pointing to their neighbors, where Islam and politics have already coalesced to topple secular rulers.

In particular, the bloody civil war in neighboring Afghanistan, where various clans practicing differing degrees of Islamic radicalism still fight for control of the war-ravaged country, reverberates over Central Asia like the

thunder of an approaching storm.

So far, the only Islamic political party operating openly in the newly independent states is in Tajikistan. The party, the United Tajik Opposition, waged war on the Moscow-backed regime, and its leader, Said Abdulhadi Nuri, is set to share power with it under a recently signed peace accord.

Even if Tajikistan’s Islamists prove too weak or preoccupied to influence their neighbors in Central Asia and the Caucasus, home grown poverty, unemployment and repression could achieve the same result.

“Three years ago, I would have said there could be no religious activism here,” said Layla Unisova, a secular political opposition leader in Azerbaijan, where few Muslim families fail to wrestle open a forbidden bottle of wine or champagne for a special meal. “But let’s face it. We live on the border of the Islamic world. If people stay hungry, with no food and no education, religious fundamentalism has fertile ground to grow.”

In the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries, Central Asia saw a spate of uprisings led by charismatic Muslim preachers against Russia’s imperial occupation.

Passing through those old powderkegs to the countryside of what is now Uzbekistan, the traveler finds it hard to imagine them as vanguards of a holy war. The only movement is the splashing of naked children in mud puddles and the staggering of oxen in the humid heat. Dusty, dun-colored buildings sit like giant blocks of concrete dumped on the flat landscape.

But the real Technicolor life of traditional Central Asia flourishes, as it always has, inside family compounds. Sunflowers as big as dinner-plates sway in the gardens. Apple trees hang heavy with shining fruit. Hand-dyed silk cushions in pinks, corals and yellows provide seating.

In the countryside, the mood is bleak and often angry that religious freedom has come with limits and conditions.

“This government is against Islam,” said a young woman in the Uzbekistani town of Margilan who risks arrest by secretly teaching the Koran to neighborhood girls. “There is no work. We can barely afford to feed. And now they want to keep us from our religion.”

LW Times-Washington Post News Service

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مكتبة من القرآن

Kingdom of the Fair into Jordan, by Amman. Lonely Planet.

Reviewed by Kerry O'Neill.

ANNE CAULFIELD

For those who prefer a more Western style of travel, the book is a good guide to the country's history and culture. It's a good starting point for those who want more information on the country's history and culture. It's a good starting point for those who want more information on the country's history and culture.

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I want to encourage the potential readers to see that this would be a good book to read. It's a good starting point for those who want more information on the country's history and culture. It's a good starting point for those who want more information on the country's history and culture.

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Clifford's "The Islamic Revolution" is a good starting point for those who want more information on the country's history and culture. It's a good starting point for those who want more information on the country's history and culture. It's a good starting point for those who want more information on the country's history and culture.

The light-hearted and makes it easy to read. It's a good starting point for those who want more information on the country's history and culture. It's a good starting point for those who want more information on the country's history and culture.

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AMMAN (Star)—Moh

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There is a certain far ble of making even the Al-Jawahri once said: "I are familiar. I paid their poems reach deep into body and soul lived in mad Baghdad, a fellow c says 'Jawahri's poetry and often loud in tone." Al Jawahri's rich c inform his distinguished Abd Al Wahid Lu' model of modesty and can we reach?"

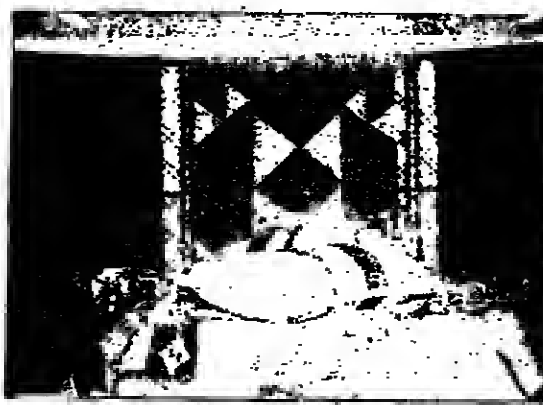
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Bani Hamida exhibition at Kan Zaman village

Under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya Bint Al Hassan, Jordan Tourism Investments/ArtZaman and Jordan Society for Development are holding an exhibition of Bani Hamida rugs at Al Baidar Hall of the historic village of Kan Zaman.

The exhibition is sponsored by Nashashibi and Ebbini Forms and is open to the public daily from 9 am to 11 pm. The exhibition is a big event that is proving a big hit with the public, and admirers of this distinctive old cultural and communal art of the Bani Hamida village life of Jordan. It contains masterpieces of rugs, cushions, runners, wall hangings with various designs and colours. The exhibition ends on 20 September.



Western traveller explores mysteries of Jordan

Kingdom of the Film Stars, a Journey into Jordan, By Annie Caulfield, London, Lonely Planet, 1997, pp250

Reviewed by Kerry O'Neill

ANNIE CAULFIELD'S book *Kingdom of the Film Stars*, promises to 'deftly unpick tight-woven Western myths about the Arab world,' telling 'the story of a cross-cultural love affair with booziness and humor.'

It's a good starting point for those wanting more information on Jordan either before, during or after a visit, and a pleasant break from the heavy history books that make you wonder why you ever wanted to visit it in the first place.

Just published by 'Lonely Planet' (known for their popular travel-guides) in their new 'Journeys' series, you can guess the nature of the book. It's designed to complement their 'fact & figure' guides. What you can't prepare for is Caulfield's wit. The down-to-earth, humorous style immediately attracts you to this highly enjoyable and deceptively informative first book, which discusses every stereotype you ever had about life and travelling in Jordan.

I want to criticize this book, and to ask all potential readers to leave it well alone. But that would be pure malice for you see, this is personal. Caulfield has ruined my career before it even began, by writing the book I'd always planned would make me a million. Despite this, I find myself encouraging you to read it, you'll enjoy its company.

On first reading you are forgiven for summing the tale up as a mere, if exotic, love story. Why has 'Lonely Planet' published it at all?... 'Mills & Boon' (romantic novels) seems far more appropriate. A closer inspection however, reveals the book as a tangle of information on Jordan, its subjects, sights and socialites.

Caulfield's bustling Amman symbolizes the 'dichotomy between old and new' that is apparent all over Jordan, with the 'dusty Palestinian boys' of Downtown and the rich, 'Versace-wearing' Arabs of the suburbs sleeping under the same bright, low moon. The traditional lifestyle of the Bedouin in 'Lawrence of Arabia's' Wadi Rum desert make conditions in Aqaba, on Jordan's Red Sea coast, seem like paradise: 'almost a class Mediterranean resort.'

The light-hearted yet accurate style even makes Omayyad and Byzantine historical facts painless to read, told in an almost chatty, conversational style. Caulfield visits Jordan's



famous heritage of Desert Castles with Rathwan, her Bedouin boyfriend. With his 'film-star' looks, Rathwan relaxes whilst Caulfield explores Qusayr Amra and the Omayyad baths at Hammam am-Sarakh, to name but two. Rathwan notices that 'foreigners like this...they don't feel they have seen the [ruins] properly until they have climbed on [them]'. Deny that if you dare!

Descriptions of Caulfield's physical relationship with Rathwan are as discreet as the activities themselves, such as the days spent in the carved city of Petra, when it was 'parched dry in summer, carpeted with flowers in spring...and soot coated in winter'. The romance is neither sensationalized nor cheapened with clichés—'you can't just go off to the desert and have an affair'. With the deeper understanding of Jordanian culture gained throughout the book, you realize that Jordan isn't all desert, and Arabs aren't all waiting for their 'holiday romance' to board the flight home so they can go and brag at the local *nar-jileh* cafe. A Bedouin having an affair with a foreigner brings 'the same level of shame as being branded a thief in Western society'.

Above left, the author during a relaxing moment in London



Caulfield's attitude towards her relationship reflects the optimistic 'no indication, minimal-bothering-to-look' qualities observed on Jordan's manicured roads. Though exhilarating, the results of such behavior are inevitable, so you enjoy every moment while you can.

Caulfield's experiences in Jordan which span years, not brief, superficial weeks, are shaped by characters from all walks of Mid-

dle Eastern life. 'Enigmatic' Bedouin, Iraqi smugglers, gun-toting oddballs and suburban, cafe-dwelling 'intelligentsia' all colour the larger, multi-cultural picture. Her book will appeal to equally as wide an audience. It will make you late back to work after a leisurely lunch-time read, late to bed and might even explain why you sleep through your alarm the next day. But hey, she's ruined my career, why stop there? ■

A tribute to Al Jawahri from great Arab poets

AMMAN (Star)—Mohammad Mahdi Al Jawahri has taken his place in the ranks of the most renowned neoclassical Arab poets. Throughout his long and productive career, he composed a wealth of now-legendary Arab poetry, destined to remain in the readers' minds for years to come, despite his death earlier in July.

Jawahri was born in Al Nejeef, Iraq, in 1900, where he was educated in traditional Islamic sciences, philology and literature. Critics say his work represents a continuation and further development of giant classical Arab poets like Abu Al-tayyib Mutanabbi and Abu Al-Alaa' Ma'arri.

From 1921 onwards, when two poems in the Iraqi newspaper *The Independence* appeared, his output has been prolific. His first volume of verse came as early as 1923, a collection of poems in which he largely imitated the great Arab poets like Kalla Abu Madi and the 'Prince of Poets', Ahmad Shawqi. The second volume appeared in 1928, containing mainly nationalistic and descriptive poetry, entitled 'Between Feeling and Emotion'.

Jawahri's real achievement lies in his political poetry, his vehicle to becoming a leading figure for all those who hated and struggled against the foreign occupation of all Arab countries, including his homeland, Iraq. His poems mercilessly attacked British and French occupation, inspiring the Arabs and glorifying their struggle against every injustice.

He dedicated one book of verse to "those who have deliberately chosen the path of freedom, light and liberation, and those who have been steadfast in their choice, eagerly enduring all the suffering and deprivation which it entails. To the victims of malice and vengeance. To those who could have been otherwise had they so wished."

There is a certain familiar quality about Jawahri's poetry capable of making even the most cynical of readers pause for thought. Al-Jawahri once said "my poems are something else, because they are familiar. I paid their price with my exile and wanderings." His poems reach deep into the dilemmas of his nation, for whom his body and soul lived in exile for so many years. Professor Mohammad Badawi, a fellow of St. Antony's College, Oxford University, says "Jawahri's poetry is generally neoclassical in form and spirit, and often loud in tone."

Al Jawahri's rich cultural background helped to inspire and inform his distinguished and universal poetry.

Ahd Al Wahid Lu'lu'a, an Iraqi critic, said "Al Jawahri was a model of modesty and gentility. After him, for what new heights can we reach?"

Shawqi Baghdadi, the famous Syrian poet said upon Al Jawahri's death, "the name of this giant poet...will be an eternal symbol of greatness, beauty and genius in our history, and in our national and cultural memory." ■



Jawahri

Congratulations!

● Tala'at Kanfani has wed Hanna Al Saeed on 9 August. The wedding ceremony took place at the "Green Field" club on the airport road. Mr Kanafani is a hairstylist and has a salon on Mecca Street



Villa Cafe at your service

VILLA CAFE needs no introduction. The attractions of Villa Cafe for the body and soul are exciting.

The charming coffee bar, which is worthy of a visit, is surrounded by many beautiful villas in Um Uthaina, close to the proposed Sheraton Hotel.

The place's tranquility give families a chance to experience peace, calm and delight that is unequalled anywhere else.

Villa Cafe is in the process of further expansion, "the last scene of Villa Cafe has not come yet," Mr Khalid Al Masri, general manager of Villa Cafe says.

"We still have a great ambition, for this project. It could even be more successful if it is enlarged. The area which is not yet fully exploited can be made use of more effectively."

Villa Cafe has room for more than 350 visitors. Mr Al Masri points out that in the coming year there will be changes, adding for instance, that there is going to be special preparations for the holy month of Ramadan.



Al Masri

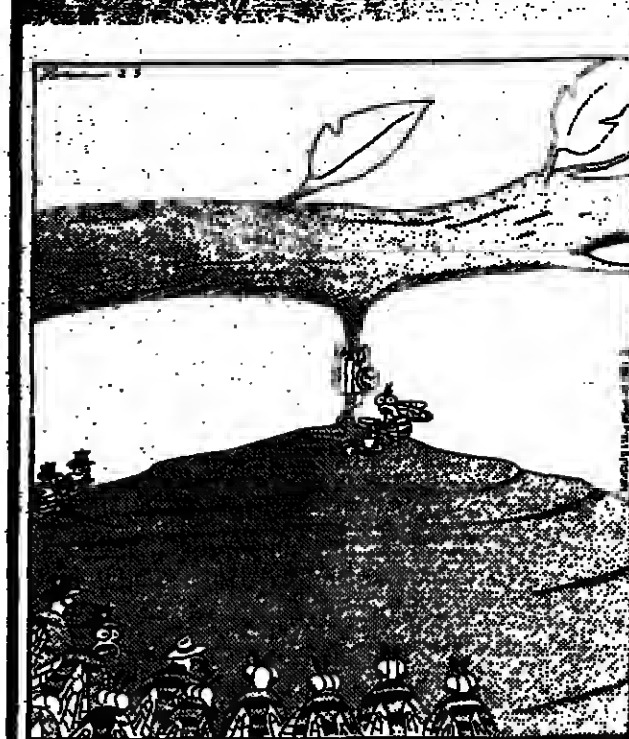
"We are looking forward to creating a special setting in Villa Cafe during Ramadan, which goes in line with the spirit of the month. There will be Shami Food and pastries during the night at the cafe."

The place is under the constant supervision and management of Mr Al Masri who says that the long experience and practice in management are the essence of success in any project.

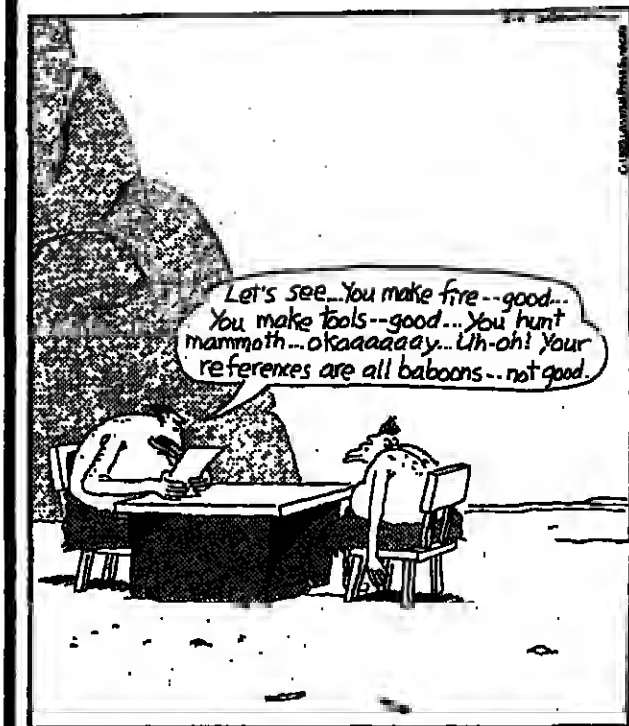
The attractive design of the place alongside the Jordanian hospitality and the wide range of excellent services offered by young well-trained and qualified personnel have made customers at home.

Villa Cafe matches the cafes in European countries, as one of the customers remarked. "I like the place because it's charming and the standards of service are excellent. I get more than I pay." He adds the charm of the place cannot be reduced to any simple description. Villa Cafe welcomes all those who miss the Arab family gatherings. ■

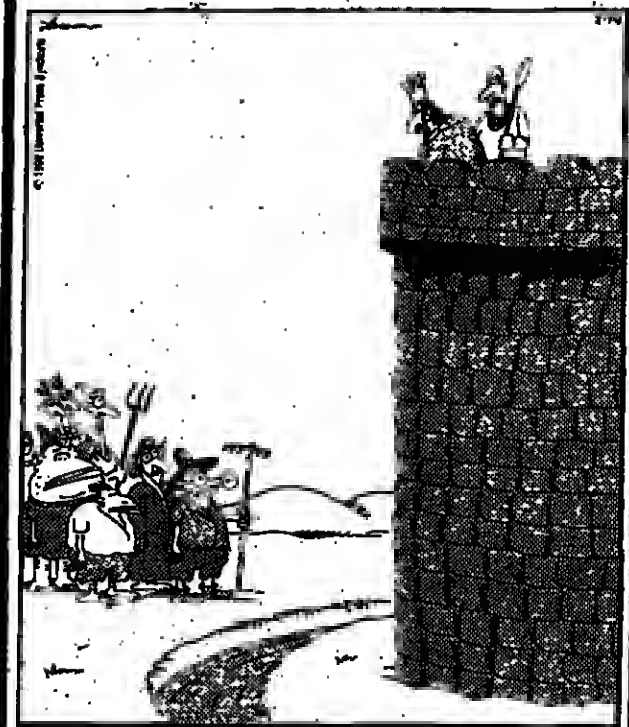
THE FAR SIDE BY GARY LARSON



"We don't know exactly who he is, Captain—a disgruntled worker, we figure."



Primitive resumes



"Those, sire, are the uncommon folk."



"Go back to sleep, Chuck. You're just havin' a nightmare — of course, we are still in hell."

SLAPSTIX

Baseball is 90 percent mental, and the other half is physical.

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The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV
from 23-29 August

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Twinkle
2:30—Wishbone
3:00—Blue Heelers
3:30—World of Geo
4:00—The Vally Between
4:30—Tilt
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Neighbors
8:00—Ties that Bind
8:30—Prism
9:10—Time Trax
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Feature Film
12:00—Ellen

SUNDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Cartoon
3:00—Emergency Express
4:00—American Chart Show
6:00—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
8:00—Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
8:30—National Geographic
9:10—Rengade
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—One West Waikiki
11:15—Sisters

MONDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Cartoon
3:30—Gillette Sports Special
3:30—Deep Water Have
4:00—Animal Show
4:30—Ocean Girl
5:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Neighbors
8:00—Murphy Brown
8:30—Baylun 5
9:10—Highlander



Emergency Room (e.r.), Monday at 10:30 pm

10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Emergency Room (e.r.)
11:15—Homicide

TUESDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:05—French Programs
3:00—Square Show
3:30—Dog House
4:30—The Alhum Show
5:15—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Coach
8:00—Tilt
8:30—Ecountner
9:10—Nature of Things
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—West Beach
11:15—Mini Series

WEDNESDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Cartoons
3:00—Global Gardner
3:30—Spell Binder
4:00—Monsters Today
4:30—Border Town
6:00—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Neighbors
8:00—Soldier's Diary
8:30—Oprah Winfrey Show
9:10—Spencer for Hire
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Land's End
11:00—American Gothic

THURSDAY

2:00—Holy Koran



Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 634149):
The Lost World (Jurassic Park)
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 634149):
Liar Liar
- Plaza (Tel: 699238):
The Substitute
- Concord I (Tel: 677420):
Batman & Robin
- Concord II (Tel: 677420):
ACE Ventura 2

2:10—Cartoons
3:00—America's Funniest People
3:30—He Shoot He Scores
4:00—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Trivial Pursuit
8:00—Parenthood
8:30—Jois and Clark (Superman)
9:10—Kung Fu
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Feature Film
12:00—Step By Step

FRIDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:05—Cartoons
3:00—French Programs
4:00—Family Matters
4:30—NBA
6:10—French Film
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Neighbors
8:00—The Health Show
8:30—Hawkeye (Drama)
9:10—Drama Series
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Mini Series
12:00—Feature Film

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

SAMEDI

5:00—Qui est qui ?
5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
6:00—Yacoutie
7:00—Le Journal
7:15—Magazine
L'œil de Colomb

DIMANCHE

5:00—Qui est qui ?
5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
6:00—Magazine

Faut pas rêver
7:00—Le Journal
7:15—Magazine pour tous
Ziva

LUNDI

5:00—Qui est qui ?
5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
6:00—Thalassa
7:00—Le Journal
7:15—Magazine scientifique
Cinq sur cinq

MARDI

5:00—Qui est qui ?
5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
6:00—Captain Café
Emission de variétés
7:00—Le Journal
7:15—Orient sur Seine

MERCREDI

5:00—Qui est qui ?
5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
6:00—Magazine
Ushuaia
7:00—Le Journal
7:15—Magazine
Ziva

JEUDI

5:00—Qui est qui ?
5:30—Divertissement
Turataia
7:00—Le Journal
7:15—Le dessous des cartes

VENREDI

3:20—Divertissement
L'école des fans
5:30—Qual numéro 1 - 2/3
7:00—Le Journal
7:15—Magazine
Alto la terre

Programs are subject to change by JTV

Movies & Videos



In the Wild Cheetahs with Holly Hunter

OSCAR WINNING actress Holly Hunter comes face to face with the world's fastest land animal in the award-winning (Meridian) wildlife documentary "In the Wild". Hunter, star of the film The Piano, is called "the cheetah lady" during her expedition because of her amazing ability to mimic cheetah cries. She says "I'm embarking on this journey to meet a creature that has always intrigued me not just for its grace, but for the way it gives everything it has, almost to the point of lethal exhaustion, just to survive."

Indeed, the long-legged cheetah is losing its race for survival, and Hunter crosses the heat-hazed terrain of Namibia and the lush National Parks of Zululand, to discover where the endangered species can survive.

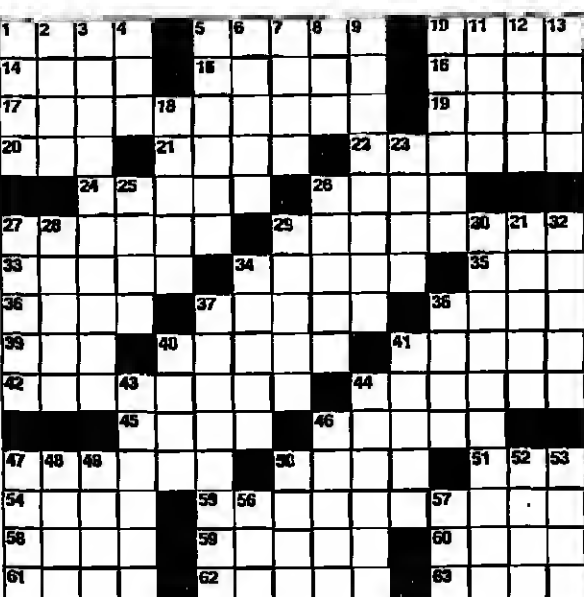
"In the Wild" was a challenge for Hunter, who likes "the element of not being entirely in control, the feeling that anything can happen at any moment. I felt like that in Africa...it's highly dramatic". Hunter is invited to release a trapped animal back into the wild, and says her belief that the cheetah wouldn't attack her was "all very simplistic in my mind...my naivete was really

exposed. The wildness in the cat's eyes was something I'd never seen before, and that really shook me." Hunter grew up on a farm in Georgia and was prepared to sleep rough, and for the cruelties of nature she might encounter. It was different from living in a city, says Hunter, because "farm children are exposed to the death of animals a lot, the cycle of life and death is something that is taken as a way of living in the world."

Phinda Park in South Africa is now the wildlife paradise in which Hunter hopes cheetahs will be able to survive. "The gigantic game park 'really is the future'."



CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- ACROSS
- 1 Yorum
 - 10 Auctioneer's word
 - 14 Early
 - 15 Suit material
 - 16 Out of existence
 - 17 Tidy up the abode
 - 18 Entertain grandly
 - 20 Certain curve
 - 21 Breakwater
 - 22 Civilized
 - 24 Leaves
 - 26 Culture
 - 27 medium
 - 28 Havers
 - 29 Collaborate
 - 30 Disorderly
 - 34 Wear away
 - 36 Meadow
 - 37 Carpenter
- DOWN
- 1 Name in
 - 2 tool
 - 30 Barbell
 - 31 Treasure
 - 41 Intrepid
 - 42 Total
 - 43 Spoke
 - 44 monotonous
 - 45 Pry curiously
 - 46 Rein
 - 47 Program for a meeting
 - 50 Lays out
 - 51 Thickheaded one
 - 54 Pro
 - 55 Place for overnight
 - 61 Curse
 - 62 Crack out
 - 63 Tom
 - 64 Sill
 - 65 Minor
 - 66 Tolerant
 - 67 Without company
 - 68 Decorative paper
 - 69 Man from Des Moines
 - 29 Foolhardy
 - 30 Nemesis
 - 31 Permission
 - 32 Like certain seals
 - 34 Crime de la crime
 - 37 Portended
 - 38 Money players
 - 39 Uge
 - 40 official
 - 41 Impudent
 - 42 Bottom
 - 43 Confines
 - 44 Semite
 - 45 Positive
 - 46 Certain collar
 - 50 Bars
 - 52 A—able
 - 53 Accomplish
 - 56 Alliance
 - 57 Paddle

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—THIS WEEK'S— HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The sun's in Virgo, helping everybody get organized. That's both a challenge and a requirement.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Don't let friends interfere with work. Don't believe the stories you hear. Stay home to nurse a friend who needs attention. Romance looks good.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Get a job or ask for a raise. Go shopping for work-related items and books. If you're looking for a new love, ask a friend to set you up.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). You're in fine form. Fall in love again, perhaps with a foreigner. Don't get between two who are sparring — let them work it out.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Listen to the grapevine for good news about your friend. A family member helps get what you've been needing. You're lucky, but clash with a loved one.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Study with a friend and learn more than you thought possible. Stop by the clinic and put your fears to rest.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Get a job or ask for a raise. Get to work on time and improve your status. Console one who clashes with authority.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). A female supervisor can make your life rough. Don't be snotty. There's a big clash coming, as your career demands conflict with your love life.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Counsel a friend with the jitters. Help make decisions. A long walk is calming. Travel's fine, but work could interfere.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). A talkative partner has the winning idea. Now that you know how, finish the assignment. Buy something to keep track of details.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You're really busy, but the work should go well. Finish up a report. Get professional help if necessary.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Only make commitments with people you've known for ages. The workload's intense. You need the money, so keep going.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Get something you want through a friend. Set a romantic interlude. Don't stay out late or trouble could develop.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: Anticipate changes. Decide what you want to have happen. Go back to a better way. You already know what it is.

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Bridge

Too Tough For the Crocodile
By Omar Sharif and Tannah Hirsch

North-South vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH

♠ A K J 7
♥ K 10 8
♦ K 8 7 6
♣ A 7

WEST EAST

♠ 4 2
♥ Q J 9 6 5 2
♦ Q
♣ J 9 5 4

SOUTH

♠ Q 10 9 8 6 5
♥ Void
♦ A 4 3 2
♣ K 8 2

The bidding:

North East South West
1NT Pass 3♠ Pass
4♠ Pass 4♠ Pass
5♠ Pass 6♠ Pass
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♥

There is often great flexibility in how you tackle a suit. Looking only at the North-South hands, how would you handle diamonds?

North-South bid excellently to the spade slam. North's cue-bid of four clubs showed a maximum no trump,

excellent spade support and first-round control of clubs. After South cue-bid diamonds, North's return cue-bid in the suit promised second-round control, while denying the ace of hearts. That was good news for South, who promptly contracted for a small slam in spades.

West led the queen of hearts, covered by the king and ace and ruffed in the closed hand. The ace and king of trumps were used as entries for two more heart ruffs, in the process extracting the comedy fangs. Next came the ace and king of clubs and a club ruff. The stage was set for declarer to tackle diamonds.

East played low on the diamond lead in dummy, as did declarer. In with the jack, East was forced to concede a ruff-suff, allowing declarer to ruff on the table, while discarding the diamond loser from hand. Note that, if the suit broke 3-2, declarer would still be safe.

It might seem that East could execute what is known as a "crocodile coup" in diamonds by going up with the queen to swallow partner's jack. But then East must return a high diamond to dummy's king, and declarer has a marked finesse in the suit to pick up East's remaining diamonds. Six spades bid and made!

Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

BOUMG

RYPEK

DRALIA

KITSCY



Now arrange the circled letters to form the complete answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: HE

Answer: What the young composer did while his friends

ANSWER: GUMBO PERKY RADIAL STICKY

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Would You Believe...

Wild Bill Hickock was shot to death while playing cards in the town of Deadwood, S.D.

The majority of automobile horns beep in the key of F.

The first Kentucky Derby was held in 1875.

The Charge of the Light Brigade took place during the Crimean War.

Erasmus is the patron saint of sailors.

A French horn would be 22 feet long if all of its coils were straightened.

A year on the planet Venus would be shorter than one on Earth. That's because Venus revolves around the sun once every 225 Earth days.

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TRUE!

By Daryl Cagle



Actual interview questions discovered in a poll of 200 college students interviewed by corporate recruiters on campus.

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Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Actualités du Pays

Sécurité routière Bienvenue au royaume des chauffards !

En 1996, plus de 33.000 accidents et 552 personnes tuées sur les routes jordanien : les chiffres les plus élevés depuis 1970. Dans 90% des cas, c'est l'inconscience humaine qui est en cause. Une situation d'autant plus alarmante que les nombreuses campagnes d'information semblent inefficaces.



Plus de 500 morts et 15.000 blessés l'année dernière en Jordanie. Parmi les tranches d'âges les plus touchées, les jeunes de 20 à 30 ans et les enfants de moins de dix ans.

On les appelle communément les « insouciantes ». Dans les milieux intellectuels, ils deviennent les « criminels de la circulation » ou encore « ceux qui abusent de la technologie ». Ce sont les conducteurs maniaques de la vitesse, qui ne s'inquiètent pas des horreurs qu'ils peuvent déclencher. Pas un jour sans qu'un chauffard ne respecte pas la sécurité routière et à chaque accident meurtrier, c'est l'indignation générale dans l'opinion publique. Les Jordaniens sont particulièrement sensibilisés depuis l'un des plus graves carambolages de l'histoire routière du pays qui s'est produit il y a trois ans entre Amman et Irbid et qui avait provoqué la mort de dizaines de personnes. La plupart étaient étudiants. C'est cette autoroute régulièrement empruntée par les Jordaniens pour se rendre à l'université de Jordanie à Amman, « Le fait que je doive tous les jours prendre un bus me rendait très inquiet », confie-t-il. Beaucoup d'accidents ont eu lieu sur cette autoroute. Il est donc très probable qu'un jour, je me retrouve soit dans un hôpital soit dans un cercueil. Pas très optimiste le jeune homme. Un malaise, qui prend les tournures d'un film catastrophe et que l'on retrouve chez d'autres. « Quand le chauffard accélère brusquement au démarrage, je sens que j'ai déjà un pied dans la tombe ! », raconte Ibrahim le plus sérieux des étudiants. Coupable, la vitesse excessive des automobilistes, qui par inconscience, ont bouleversé des vies humaines.

« Combien de temps encore, on va en prendre plein les genoux ? », s'interroge une mère en colère, son petit garçon a trouvé la mort dans un accident. Ce jour-là, un conducteur roulait très vite et brusquement, il a voulu doubler. Mais l'arrivée d'un camion en contre-sens l'a surpris et il n'a pu que se rabattre sur notre voiture.

Enfants-piétons : danger

Selon les chiffres du département de la sécurité publique (DSP), la vitesse est bien la principale cause mortelle sur la route avec 20% de décès. Malgré la répression et les contraventions, beaucoup de conducteurs jordaniens gardent le pied au plancher. Les chauffeurs de bus sont notamment dans le collimateur des usagers, qui les jugent souvent trop jeunes pour ce métier. « Ils se montrent très frivoles au volant et font de la route un champ de course. Il est navrant qu'ils sacrifient la vie d'inconnus pour quelques instants d'amusement », ce sont des reproches fréquents dans la bouche de ceux qui empruntent ces bus.

La vitesse n'est pas seule en cause, bien entendu. Les causes d'accidents mortels sont multiples. Ce sont les conducteurs, encore eux, qui ne respectent pas les conditions pour effectuer un dépassement en toute sécurité, les temps de repos ou les écarts avec les autres véhicules. Ce sont aussi les piétons, qui, la plupart du temps, ignorent le code de la circulation et traversent n'importe où, faute il est vrai de passages cloutés bien signalés. Les enfants forment sans doute une des menaces les plus effrayantes pour un automobiliste. Souvent ils jouent dans la rue et traversent sans prévenir, juste devant le pare-choc d'une voiture qui ne les a pas vu venir. En 1996, 115 enfants de moins de dix ans ont trouvé la mort sur les routes du royaume et plus de 3000 ont été blessés. C'est la tranche d'âge la plus touchée parmi les piétons.

Face à l'augmentation croissante du nombre d'accidents, le département de la sécurité publique demande simplement aux automobilistes de respecter le code de la route et rappelle que pour un excès de vitesse, le contrevenant peut écoper de trois mois de prison ferme (maximum) ou d'une amende de 50 à 200 dinars ou bien les deux à la fois. Est-ce réellement suffisant ?

Par ailleurs, les nombreuses campagnes d'information routière et les émissions pédagogiques consacrées à la sécurité semblent totalement inefficaces. Les autorités doivent donc envisager rapidement d'autres solutions plus radicales pour stopper la casse. Pourquoi, par exemple, ne pas rendre obligatoire le port de la ceinture à l'avant ? Parmi les nombreuses statistiques établies par le DSP, le cas d'un groupe de 7000 personnes, tuées ou blessées est particulièrement édifiant. Toutes ces personnes étaient assises à côté du chauffeur. Aucune ne portait la ceinture de sécurité.

Plus de 400 Palestiniens dans les prisons d'Israël sans jugement

Ces prisonniers de l'ombre seraient restés ignorés si l'un d'entre eux n'avait réussi à briser le mur du silence par un étonnant échange épistolaire. « Détenus administratifs » sur ordre de l'armée israélienne, Imad Seba est interné depuis décembre 1995. Ce traducteur de l'université de Bir Zeit en Cisjordanie, âgé de 35 ans, n'a jamais été inculpé ni pu prendre connaissance des charges retenues contre lui, qui relèvent du secret militaire.

Il est sorti de l'anonymat récemment en publiant une lettre ouverte à un officier de réserve israélien, condamné en juillet par une cour militaire pour avoir refusé de servir de geôlier aux « détenus administratifs ». Dans ce « message à un officier inconnu », le détenu a salué cet « ami de l'autre côté de la barrière », s'étonnant qu'il n'ait pas pris pour argent comptant « les explications officielles qui voudraient que tout détenu soit un terroriste ou un terroriste en puissance ». Imad Seba est soupçonné d'appartenir au Front Populaire de Libération de la Palestine (FPLP), une organisation opposée aux accords sur l'autonomie palestinienne avec Israël. Il ne pourrait appartenir au FPLP et a en vain demandé de sortir de prison pour étudier aux Pays-Bas, ayant reçu une bourse du gouvernement néerlandais pour y poursuivre des études en sciences sociales. L'armée israélienne affirme que la détention administrative est indispensable à la sécurité de l'Etat car elle permet de frapper des activistes qui « pousse à la violence » mais contre lesquels le bureau du procureur ne dispose pas de preuves.

C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

Cinéma

Cycle consacré à l'acteur Michel Piccoli.

Le journal d'une femme de chambre, de Luis Bunuel (1963). Célestine, engagée comme femme de chambre, observe les faits et gestes des bourgeois qu'elle sert.

Lundi 1er septembre à 20h30 au Centre culturel français. Tél. : 637009/636445/612658.

Société Chaque Jordanien cherche son chien

Ami fidèle ou animal impur ? Le chien de compagnie est toujours au centre d'une polémique jordano-jordanienne. Et pourtant les animaux domestiques, en général, sont de plus en plus nombreux dans les foyers, comme en témoigne l'un des rares vétérinaires spécialisés du royaume.

« Lorsque j'ai ouvert ma clinique et mon chenil en 1975, grâce à un don du roi qui lui-même aime beaucoup les animaux, ma clientèle était composée à 90% d'étrangers. A la fin des années 70, c'était 50-50. Aujourd'hui, mes clients sont en majorité des Jordaniens ». Le docteur Alex Abu Ghazaleh est l'observateur privilégié de l'évolution des mentalités vis-à-vis des animaux domestiques. Il est en effet le seul vétérinaire du pays à soigner exclusivement des chiens, des chats et autres bêtes qui nous tiennent compagnie. Les 500 autres vétérinaires s'occupent surtout des cheptels de bovins et d'ovins ainsi que des fermes d'élevage de poulets. Une dizaine d'entre eux acceptent de traiter également les animaux de compagnie. Si le travail du docteur Abu Ghazaleh est aujourd'hui reconnu, cela n'a pas toujours été facile. « Au début, on me considérait comme un médecin insuffisamment qualifié pour s'occuper des bêtes humaines », plaisante-t-il.

Il semble pourtant que l'intolérance à l'égard des animaux domestiques soit encore très répandue. Les chiens sont particulièrement visés et le déshabillage des connotations religieuses. Certains détracteurs s'appuient sur les hadith (paroles du Prophète) pour justifier leur condamnation du toutou, considéré comme impur. Un jour qu'il était arrêté à un feu rouge avec son chien dans la voiture, le docteur Abu Ghazaleh a eu la surprise de se voir insulter par un passant, qui lui a reproché vivement de traiter un animal « impur » comme si c'était un être humain. Le vétérinaire s'étonne également de l'agressivité de certains Jordaniens qui critiquent les soins accordés aux animaux de compagnie : « Je me rappelle qu'un jour j'ai tiré une fois à l'élevage des chiens mangent du foie tandis que l'homme a fait, il est allé se plaindre à l'animal, quelles que soient les raisons ».

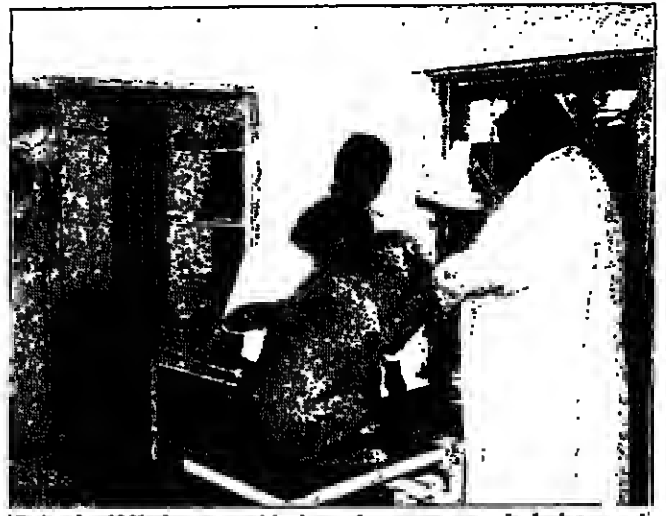
Certes, des propriétaires de chiens, plutôt du genre j'm'en-foutiste, peuvent susciter la critique. Certains « nouveaux riches » achètent un chien pour finir de « décorer » leur maison. Ils le confient au gardien et ne s'en occupent guère. Mais la plupart des gens, même les plus pauvres, aiment les animaux, comme en témoigne le docteur Abu Ghazaleh : « Une pauvre dame m'a apporté un chat malade qu'elle avait trouvé dans la rue en me suppliant de le soigner gravement car elle n'avait pas de quoi payer les soins ».

En règle générale, les animaux ne coûtent pas cher. Les Jordaniens les recueillent souvent dans la rue et le commerce des animaux de race est encore peu développé, l'importation étant en principe interdite même si on peut entrer en Jordanie avec son propre animal de compagnie. Quant à la nourriture, si les boîtes de conserve sont chères et peu fiables, on peut tout de même se débrouiller pour alimenter correctement son chien pour un dinar par semaine.

Bergers allemands à 85%

Parmi les chiens qui ont la vie dure dans le pays, on considère l'élevage des chiens comme une importation occidentale. Au contraire, explique le docteur Abu Ghazaleh, c'est une tradition arabe. De nombreux poètes ont parlé du chien dans leurs œuvres. Leurs aboiements faisaient partie de la vie de nos ancêtres dans le désert ou dans les villages. Depuis bien longtemps, les Arabes les ont élevés comme chiens de garde ou tout simplement parce qu'ils sont très fidèles. Comme le dit le poète Ali Ben al-Jaham pour exalter un des califes : Tu es comme le chien pour la fidélité ».

L'environnement naturel et social détermine d'autre part le choix des animaux. Aujourd'hui qu'Amman s'agrandit



Près de 60% des propriétaires s'occupent mal de leur animal et préfèrent s'en séparer au bout d'un an.

et que les Jordaniens construisent leurs maisons dans des lieux reculés, ils aiment souvent avoir un chien de garde, ce qui explique que 85% des bêtes sont des bergers allemands, 10% des dobermanns et 5% des chiens d'appartement de races diverses. Toutefois, il reste plus difficile d'obtenir un permis pour avoir un chien qu'un permis de construire. Le ministère de l'Agriculture impose toute une série de conditions très strictes : il faut une maison indépendante, un jardin, une niche, l'accord des voisins etc... Nombreux sont donc les propriétaires qui ne déclarent pas leur animal, si bien qu'il est difficile de connaître le nombre exact d'animaux domestiques dans le pays.

Du reste, s'attriste le docteur Abu Ghazaleh, les propriétaires changent souvent d'animal ou l'abandonnent carrément : « Mes propres statistiques montrent que 60% de mes clients changent chaque année, ce qui veut dire que malheureusement ils ne prennent pas assez soin de leurs bêtes ». Malgré tout, le chien continue d'être de mieux en mieux accepté dans les foyers du royaume. Les boîtes de nourriture canine envahissent les rayons des supermarchés et des petites annonces pour acheter ou vendre un toutou font leur apparition sur le réseau internet.

Mona Qaddouri

Turquie Laïcs contre islamistes, le combat continue

Mezut Yilmaz, le nouveau premier ministre turc a été poussé au pouvoir par les militaires pour empêcher l'ascension des islamistes. Mais le parti musulman de Necmettin Erbakan reste la première force parlementaire du pays, où les valeurs de l'islam sont encore très populaires.

Son père était encore président à l'époque. Fayzeh Rafsanjani, en tant que parlementaire iranienne, l'accompagnait il y a quelques mois lors d'une visite officielle en Turquie. Interrogée par un journaliste sur ses impressions vis-à-vis d'Ankara, elle a répondu que la capitale turque lui rappelait Téhéran dans les derniers jours du Shah, juste avant la Révolution islamique.

Pourtant, peu de temps après cette déclaration le premier ministre islamiste Necmettin Erbakan, leader du Refah a dû démissionner sous la menace d'un coup d'Etat militaire. Dans le même temps, soixante officiers, dont deux colonels, ont été expulsés de l'armée. Ils étaient accusés d'avoir des penchans trop prononcés pour la religion d'Allah. La Turquie sur la voie de l'éradication de l'islamisme ? Fin juillet, les réformes du système éducatif annoncées par le nouveau premier ministre Mezut Yilmaz ont provoqué des protestations violentes dans la rue. Plus de 15000 supporters du Refah ont ainsi défilé l'armée.

Plusieurs analystes se sont alors demandé si, malgré tout, la prédiction de Fayzeh Rafsanjani n'était pas en train de se réaliser. Selon eux, le spectre d'une révolution populaire comme celle qui a renversé le Shah d'Iran semble se profiler à l'horizon turc.

C'est peut-être aller trop vite en comparaison. En Iran, l'ancien régime reposait sur une seule personne : le Shah, dont le renversement du trône a suffi pour établir à la place une république islamique. En Turquie, le régime laïc repose sur une base militaire très solide, qui impose le respect au peuple. Une révolution religieuse n'est pas envisageable sans une guerre civile sanglante.

Atatürk veut un pays laïc

En fait, pour mieux comprendre les forces en jeu en Turquie, il faut remonter à la naissance de son nationalisme à la fin du XIXème siècle. Les forces laïques font leur apparition en réaction à l'affaiblissement de l'Empire ottoman, réduit à l'homme malade de l'Europe. Le mouvement des Jeunes Turcs veut faire de cet Empire moribond un membre actif et moderne de la famille européenne des nations. Après la première guerre mondiale, Mustafa Kemal, qui devient bientôt le célèbre Atatürk, lance son mouvement de réunification de la Turquie. Il fonde la République, pro-

clamée en 1923, et met sur pied un programme agressif de réformes afin d'établir un Etat centralisé, laïc et moderne selon le modèle européen (abolition du califat, mise en place d'une législation et d'un enseignement laïcs). La Turquie parvient à sortir la tête hors de l'eau mais parallèlement, les changements introduits entraînent des complexes identitaires, qui n'ont pas disparu.

1. La société turque est une mosaïque de divers groupes ethniques et religieux, qu'Atatürk a essayé d'unifier dans une seule et même identité nationale. Il a ainsi interdit de parler la langue officielle d'un pays avec lequel la Turquie ne maintenait pas de relations diplomatiques (arménien, kurde, circassien, laz). Privés de leurs droits légitimes d'expression culturelle, plusieurs minorités nationales ont constitué des mouvements clandestins anti-étatiques.

Aujourd'hui encore, quand quelqu'un vous avoue qu'il est Kurde, c'est à voix basse de peur d'être entendu et envoyé en prison.

2. Le conflit entre l'Etat laïc et la culture islamique est profondément enraciné. La laïcité, introduite par Atatürk comme alternative à l'islam, n'était pas sans avantages. Elle a permis l'intégration des groupes religieux non musulmans et la libération des femmes. Elle est acceptée par une grande partie de la population comme le choix du père vénéré de la patrie, mais comme philosophie de vie, elle reste indéfinie. La laïcité n'a donc pas réussi à remplacer l'islam en tant qu'identité culturelle forte. Un député islamiste s'interroge à ce sujet : « Nous comprenons l'islam, le christianisme et le judaïsme. Nous pouvons toujours chercher dans le Coran, la Bible ou la Torah pour expliquer ces croyances. Mais la laïcité, de quoi s'agit-il ? En quoi est-ce qu'elle nous demande de croire ? Quel est le Livre qui l'explique ? »

3. Depuis Atatürk, la Turquie a toujours cherché à rentrer dans la grande famille des nations européennes. Mais l'Union Européenne ne semble

pas prête à admettre en son sein un pays de culture musulmane. Sur le Vieux Continent, l'immigration est un sujet tabou, source de tensions sociales, qui seraient exacerbées si soixante millions de Turcs étaient autorisés à se déplacer librement dans toute l'Europe. Face à cette impasse, les islamistes proposent de développer les relations avec les pays musulmans, ce qui suscite des craintes non seulement parmi les laïcs de Turquie, mais aussi chez les occidentaux.

Prof pour 1500 francs

Mais le passé n'explique pas tout. Le Refah est aussi populaire parce que les électeurs boudent les partis laïcs traditionnels, entachés par des affaires de corruption et de malversations. De nombreux Turcs condamnent notamment la mauvaise distribution des richesses. Un homme d'affaires glisse dans la conversation que 10.000 personnes se partagent les fortunes du pays quand les 74 autres millions ont du mal à joindre les deux bouts. Un professeur de lycée explique, désemparé, qu'il touche seulement 1500 francs par mois après 30 ans de carrière. Sa femme travaille avec un revenu équivalent mais, malgré deux salaires, ils n'arrivent pas à payer les études supérieures de leur fils.

Aujourd'hui les islamistes ont été écartés du pouvoir sous la pression de l'armée et le premier ministre actuel, Mezut Yilmaz, soutenu par les militaires, a engagé des réformes pour affaiblir leur audience. A court terme, la laïcité semble reprendre le dessus.

Le Refah de Necmettin Erbakan reste pourtant la première force parlementaire du pays. Par ailleurs, à trop vouloir réduire les islamistes au silence, le pouvoir risque de favoriser la naissance de mouvements clandestins violents comme en Algérie, qui trouveraient des alliés de choix parmi des groupes ethniques déjà en état de guerre civile, au premier rang desquels les Kurdes.

Ali Kassay



Au début du mois, les islamistes sont descendus dans les rues d'Ankara pour protester contre la volonté du nouveau premier ministre, Mezut Yilmaz, de réduire l'éducation religieuse à l'école. Les policiers sont intervenus manu militari pour évacuer les manifestants. Onze d'entre eux ont été ensuite transportés à l'hôpital.

5 fois plus de morts en Jordanie qu'en France

Bien sûr pas en valeur absolue mais proportionnellement au nombre de véhicules en circulation dans chacun des pays. Des chiffres qui soulignent les progrès à réaliser pour la sécurité de tous sur les routes jordanien.

	JORDANIE			FRANCE
	1995	1996	Tx croix/an	1994
Nombre de véhicules	321 373	342 537	6,5%	32 400 000
accidents	28970	33784	16,6%	132 726 *
blessés	13184	15375	16,6%	180 832
morts	469	552	17,7%	8533
Taux pour 1000 véhicules				
accidents	90‰	99‰	9,5%	4‰ *
blessés	41‰	45‰	9,5%	6‰
morts	1,5‰	1,6‰	10,5%	0,3‰

* Pour la France, seuls les accidents corporels sont dénombrés. Source : Vieilles Etudes, Direction de l'Information Agricole.

28 AUGUST 1997

W E E K E N D

THE STAR 11

Where have the French designers gone?

By Vanessa Friedman

WHAT HAS happened to the French fashion designers? The year that marks the 50th anniversary of that most venerable of Parisian style institutions the house of Dior has seen a second wave of foreign designers storming the bastions of several of the most influential couture and prêt-à-porter houses.

This is not just a British thing. The huge publicity that surrounded the appointments of John Galiano (at Dior), Alexander McQueen (at Givenchy) and Stella McCartney (at Chloé) has made them the most notable members of the foreign legion. But, in their wake, has come a host of other invaders. Americans Marc Jacobs at Louis Vuitton, Narciso Rodriguez (after that wedding dressing designed for Carolyn Bessette Kennedy) at Loewe, while Belgian Martin Margiela is at Hermes and Singapore-born, London-trained Andrew Gn is being hired by Balmain.

The labels inside the clothes may be among the grandest in the pantheon of Gallic fashion, but the talent behind them is decidedly out-of-reach.

"The French designer is no longer chic," says Patrick McCarthy, executive vice-president and executive editor of W

omen's Wear Daily. Other than Jean-Paul Gaultier and Marine Sibon, there are almost no new important native talents on the scene (and Gaultier and Sibon are not so new).

The question is why. Is France no longer producing home-grown talent? Is this just a bizarre blip produced by another turn of the fashion wheel or is something deeper at work? The answer begins with a definition of exactly what constitutes a "French" designer.

"A designer is French because he works in France," says fashion historian Karel Le Bourhis, for many years personal assistant to Diana Vreeland, grand empress of style. For Le Bourhis, it is not "made in France" but "made in France" that matters.

Jacques Mouclier, president of the Fédération de la Couture, not surprisingly agrees. "We've never made any distinction between French designers and foreign designers. We don't think of Karl Lagerfeld as German," he says.

Lagerfeld himself would probably dispute this. In a recent magazine profile, the designer happily claimed the title of "invader". It is also doubtful whether McQueen and McCartney consider themselves French, or Galiano, who has been

working in Paris for about 10 years.

Still, according to Richard Martin, director of the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum: "The French have always claimed fashion as their own. When the Japanese designers Rei Kawakubo and Yohji Yamamoto were the most influential on the scene, they said they were French."

There is some logic to this. Few would argue that Paris is the capital of fashion. The city's fashion week is the biggest, longest and most crowded of the circuit, drawing press, buyers and clients from around the world. There is a tradition of assimilated couturiers: although many people assume Yves St Laurent is French, he is Algerian, and past stars Balenciaga, Mainbocher and Molyneux weren't natives. Father of couture Charles Frederick Worth, who started it all when he opened his house in the 1860s, was not French but British.

Paris is still where the money and security is to be found in the fashion world. No matter how much acclaim Galiano and McQueen received in London, at times they were both sleeping on friends' floors. Paris is also where the history is.

"Foreigners have always been drawn to Paris," says Joan Juliet Buck, editor of French Vogue. In the 1920s, the milieu was literary; the new wave of immigrants, the designers, also found the city of Dior and Chanel an artistic and philosophical haven.

"The work done here is different from the sort of work that would be produced in another city," says Le Bourhis. "Mrs Vreeland used to say, 'It is the sky of Paris, the light of Paris, that makes the difference', and it's true."

Indeed, McQueen's collection for Givenchy, shown in Paris, and the collection for his own label, shown in London, were markedly different. McCartney, perhaps acknowledging the wide expanse between her new home and her old, has closed down her own line.

Still, it would be simplistic to explain the absence of contemporary young French designers by saying there have always been foreigners in France, and that being in France confers upon them an implicit national status. Indubitably part of the reason so many French houses are turning to outside talent is precisely because that talent is not French.

As McCarthy says, "The model for the contemporary couture house is Chanel: take a stodgy old house, bring in a brash young designer, and turn it around." Brashness is not a quality often associated with the French youth of today. While purists recoiled in horror when Lagerfeld first sent his postmodern take on the little black suit out on the catwalks, his creations were the fashion success story of the 1980s.

While living in the birthplace of couture can be an inspiration for a newcomer, it can be debilitating for a native. This is acknowledged by the executives responsible for the three latest appointments: Marc Jacobs, Stella McCartney and Martin Margiela, albeit grudgingly.

The party line is "talent knows no borders." "Marc brings a surprise to Vuitton,"

says Jean-Marc Loubier, the company's marketing and communications director, when explaining the appointment. "There's no sense of the need to adhere to pure tradition" which is translated by Buck to mean, "You need irreverence".

"Martin has proved himself very avant-garde and iconoclastic," says Jean-Louis Dumas, chief executive of the Hermes Group, which looked at many designers for its ready-to-wear line before offering the post to Margiela. "We wanted to bring a new spirit to the line."

Mourir Mouffarige, president of Chloé, says about the selection of Stella McCartney: "We looked for an understanding of what women will want to wear today and in 2000". The company considered 41 designers for the job of following in Lagerfeld's footsteps; of these, only five were French.

"Perhaps British talent has evolved more rapidly than French," says Buck. "The French system is not conducive to creativity. It's extremely hierarchical, revolves around doing things according to the rules, and implants these attitudes from a very young age. I went to a French school, and the best grade anyone could get was 18 out of 20. The message is that you're never good enough."

Couple that message with the lack, at least recently, of the national sense of possibility and excitement which can be stirred by economic growth, and the absence of an active group of young French designers is less of a puzzle. During most of the 1990s, France has been mired in what Buck terms "la crise". Le Bourhis calls "a bad mood" and economists call a serious recession.

"Fashion reflects society," says Le Bourhis, "our society has been struggling with political and economic problems. Young people got tangled up in all the social upheaval."

The highly structured framework supporting the French fashion industry also works against the emergence of a new class of home-grown designers. In the US and Britain, it is possible to graduate from art school, cobble together some backing and produce, by the skin of your teeth in a back room, a tiny show.

In Paris, the fashion houses are strictly controlled by the Chambre Syndicale, which lays down the path to becoming a designer school, then years of anonymous apprenticeship and the rules governing the creation of a new couture house. All of which is expensive and daunting for a newcomer. For example, to qualify as a couture house, you must employ at least 20 people in your atelier. Hussein Chalayan, one of Britain's hottest designers and considered for the Givenchy post, employs only a handful in his London workshop.

"It's a good system for training assistants, not designers, and it doesn't work any more," says McCarthy. It values tradition and reverence above innovation and creativity.

"Ultimately," says Martin, "you need three things to create a local stable of talent: you need the infrastructure to support it, institutions disposed to creativity, and a popular culture that informs the designer." All of these ingredients have



been, and still are, present in France, but the balance is out of kilter with too much structure, not enough institutional freedom, and a popular culture that seems more interested in preserving the past than creating a vibrant present.

There is also a discernible absence of that final ingredient essential to a design house's success: an understanding of marketing. It is marketing, in the codified form of advertising and the more quicksilver form of shows, that generates the editorial coverage and designer profiles the buzz.

Marketing is part of the point when Alexander McQueen places a bewinged male model over the entrance to his first Givenchy show. "The Italians were the first to understand that advertising power translates into commercial power," says McCarthy. "The Americans followed, but the French are not entirely there yet."

In part, this can be blamed on the success of the in-house perfume industry, which brought in such high revenues that much of the financial pressure for the houses and designers to stay alert about the business of selling clothes simply wasn't there; and in part it can be blamed on the belief, long dear to Gallic hearts, that couture, and even prêt-à-porter, is art, and art should not be subservient to commerce.

In hiring a young designer who

doesn't have to overcome this belief, the houses are buying commercial as well as technical know-how. And they are kicking-starting their own industry.

"New blood is good," says Le Bourhis and Loubier. Mouffarige, Dumas and Mouclier all agree. One of the concrete results of the foreign "invasion" is that the federation has realised that to preserve the prestige of couture it needs to rethink its requirements: fashion, after all, is a fluid industry.

The staves governing new couture houses are slowly being loosened. Two established ready-to-wear houses (Gaultier and Mugler) have been elevated to the ranks of couture "membres invités" by dint of creating made-to-measure garments for specific clients. The Italian houses of Valentino and Versace, as well as Russian Valentin Yudashkin, have been included among the couture ranks as "membres correspondants".

The recent elections have stirred the Parisian scene. The somnolent fashion industry is waking up. At the last couture shows the media, after years of stories about the "death of Paris", sensed the rejuvenation and several declared the French capital once again the place to watch.

Financial Times Syndication



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WORKSTATION
COMPUTING & HIGH TECH
NOTES

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Computer & IT companies

Welcome to The Star's Workstation, the absolute source on what's hot and what's not in Jordan's IT market. For more information, call 548298 or email us at starnews@com.net.jo with your news and views.

Raw power in your palm, with pocket PCs

By Jabra Gheim

Special to The Star
IF YOU'VE always dreamed of having a laptop computer, but couldn't afford one then I've got news for you. It takes about \$400 to acquire a "Palmtop computer", or what is called a "Handheld PC". These machines allow you to send and receive faxes, e-mail, and even browse the Internet using a PC card attached to your phone jack or your cell phone.

All of these little wonders run 32-bit operating systems, with multi-tasking and multi-threading. In addition they come with "pocket versions" of Word and Excel or equivalents.

They are not very comfortable when it comes to typing long business reports and messages, but they sure do a good job giving you access to the most important documents you have on your PC. An important feature all these gizmos share is that you can hook them to your PC and download all the information you need. This way you have easy, fast, and definitely comfortable access to your information while you are on the road.

Any Palmtop in the markets operates with two AA batteries and gives you about 50-60 hours of operation.

When it comes to the specifics of the operating systems that run these machines you have a wide choice. Mac lovers can choose from the famous Message Pad line from Apple. These machines are very nifty. They can recognize your handwriting (English of course). This means that you use a special pen to write on the screen.

Then the machine turns your handwriting into electronic text you can process. The Message Pad line is more expensive than its PDA relatives, but I think it is worth it.

If you're a Windows fan—like myself—then your palmtop will definitely run Windows CE.



E. Windows CE is a 32-bit OS with an open architecture that supports a variety of devices and embedded mobile or multimedia programs. It was designed with Windows users in mind. So far, seven of the biggest computer manufacturers in the world, including Hitachi and Hewlett-Packard, have started making Win CE devices for under \$500.

If you are platform neutral, then the Pison line of products might be for you. These machines use a 32-bit OS called EPOC32, which is written completely in C++.

Java fans should look out for MonAMI, soon to hit the shelves. MonAMI is a

small, lightweight, Java based PDA that is perfect for the mobile professional, who wants to browse the net, send and receive e-mail. It is cross-platform and, if developed well in design, it will rule. If Java stations won't own the hearts of personal users, then MonAMI will.

There are a lot of choices, but the question I've had on my mind all week is, "Why don't we Arabize at least one of these systems?"

Windows CE is a perfect candidate for localization. There is large number of programmers in the region who are Windows experts. Psions supports the Java standard. Java supports Unicode completely, so it should make the Arabization task possible.

The same applies to the Newton MessagePad line, based on Mac software. The Mac platform has been popular in the Middle East area for the past decade and a half.

Programmers who can handle this task are surely available. The handwriting recognition part is available too.

Some companies in the region, specifically in Jordan, have been working on handwriting recognition software. This software could be easily optimized for the handheld PC. In addition, the hardware capabilities do exist.

Consumers will surely appreciate a palmtop computer more than a typical multilingual dictionary or organizer.

How Internet standards are set and documented: The stock of the Internet's blue prints!

By Jawad Abbassi

Special to The Star

THE ARCHITECTS work is visible on the project's site through the blueprints that detail all intricate aspects of the project. Without a detailed blueprint to act as the terms of reference for all parties involved in the project, the contractors would be puzzled and work would simply come to a halt.

Similarly, the Internet—consisting of loosely organized autonomous and interconnected networks adhering to open standards—needs its own blue print to act as the term of reference for all those involved: the users, the telecommunication and IT equipment manufacturers.

When a certain specification is produced by the industry it is usually made available for informal review as an "Inherent draft" for a period of six months. The specification is then either removed altogether or is recommended by the Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG) to be published in an RFC (Request for Proposed Document).

RFC document series present the official publication channels for Internet Standards documents, and other publications of the IESG, Internet Architecture Board (IAB) and the Internet Community. In a sense, they are the Internet's herald which relays a wide range of topics, in addition to description of standards, ranging from describing procedures for organizations and the common practices relating to the Internet.

RFCs are maintained and coordinated by the RFC editor (under IAB) and can be retrieved from various sites on the Internet by FTP, WWW, and even email based FTP. One such server is "nisc.jvnc.net" where an index of all RFCs as well as the RFCs themselves can be retrieved by sending an email message to "sendrft@nisc.jvnc.net" with the RFC number in the subject field (for the whole index "RFC-index" should be typed). These RFCs include all Internet standards, contemporary and obsolete, descriptions of the functioning of all parties involved in the Internet and

guidelines to using the Internet, such as "Netiquette" practices.

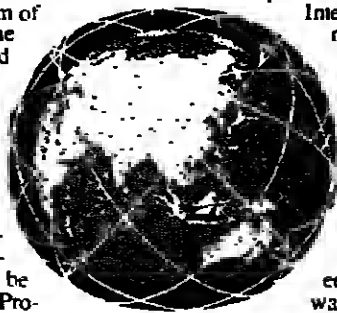
RFCs have special numbers and the technological specifications pass through maturity levels before becoming Internet standards, therefore the RFCs document the changes by amending the information as well as amending the numbering and detailing the status.

Each RFC details which other RFCs were made obsolete by its publication and which more recent RFCs made it obsolete. For example, the description of the process of Internet standards is detailed by the most recent RFC 2026 which made RFC 1602 obsolete.

On the Internet Standards Track Maturity levels, a specification is first published in an RFC as a "Proposed Standard" which after being successfully implemented is elevated to a "Draft Standard" indicating that the green light is given for a wide implementation by the equipment manufacturers and software developers. At the stage of "Draft Standard" unforeseen problems are dealt with after which the specification is raised to the ranks of an Internet Standard.

At this stage its specific latest RFC is giving the extra three letters of STD with its own STD number. However, it retains its RFC number. It must be noted that many specifications are published in RFCs as "experimental", "informational" or "Historic" standards which never become Internet standards or have been superseded by newer developments. The RFC is further subdivided into a sub-series called the "Best Current Practice" BCP documents which standardize practices and allows for common guidelines and policies. RFCs can be thought of as a continually updated and modified huge set of blue prints.

Had the Internet been a project to be finished under a set time frame, the contractor would have gone ballistic by all these changes and developments! ■

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News update

NETS offers FREE Internet connectivity on trial basis

● Jordanian Internet enthusiasts received a pleasant surprise from NETS, an Internet Service Provider, which offered free Internet connectivity to users on a trial basis, up until 31 August, 1997.

This is part of NETS commitment to receive feedback to fine tune its Internet on-line service prior to its formal introduction. The service is fully up and running. The hundreds of users who tested it were very pleased with the speed of the connection, which most claimed was the best they have enjoyed so far in Jordan. For

more information, contact NETS at telephone 5510101.

Version 3.0 of the Arabia On Line site

● Arabia On Line, a leading source of Arab information on the Internet, will soon publish version 3.0 of its site.

The new site can be described as "heavy on good content, light on graphics", which is a formula for success due to its faster download time. Arabia On Line provides readers with fresh daily news, and content brewed in-house. Internet surfers will truly enjoy this new site. To check out Arabia On Line, log into the following address: <http://arabia.com>.

Manchester United missing the target

MANCHESTER, England—The issue of goals—or rather the lack of them—continues to worry Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson as the Premiership champions head for Wednesday's clash at Everton.

During the close season it was United's defence that was providing the biggest cause for concern as Ferguson hunted the globe for players capable of shoring up a back-line which conceded 44 league goals last term.

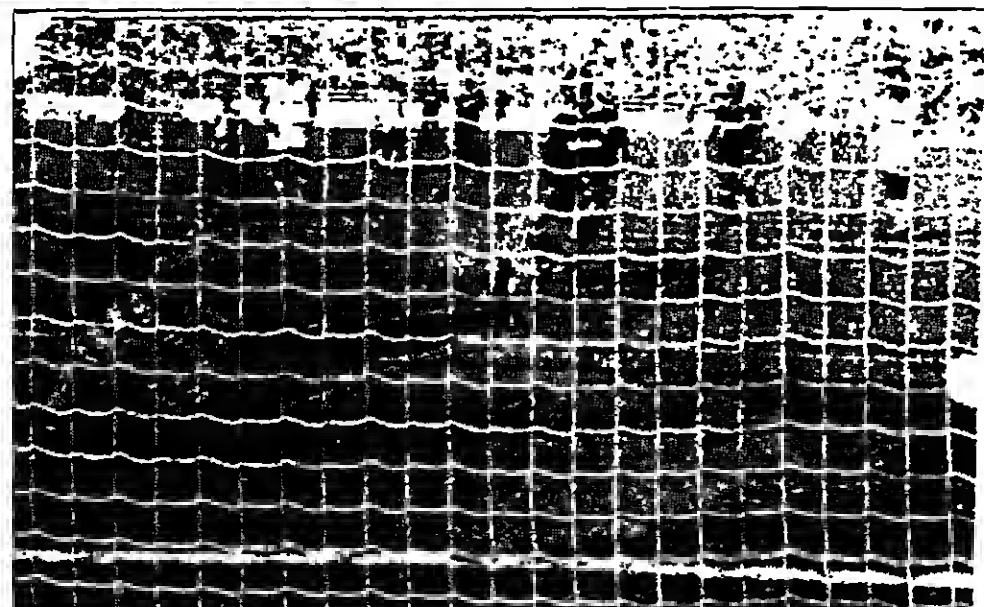
Only Blackburn's Henning Berg could be persuaded to join the Old Trafford set-up, but so far United have managed to keep three consecutive clean sheets.

Now Ferguson's attention has switched to the other end of the pitch, where goals have been in short supply.

United have dominated English football in the 1990s without ever having to rely on an out-and-out goalscorer in the mold of Alan Shearer or Gary Lineker.

The goals have come from out wide and midfield as much as from upfront, but that has not been the case in the opening encounters of the new campaign which has produced just three goals from 270 minutes of action.

SPORTS



Two of those have come from midfielders Nicky Butt and David Beckham while the third was an unintentional gift from Spurs defender Ramon Vega.

England star Teddy Sheringham arrived as a summer replacement for Eric Cantona, but he has yet to find his feet—or the goal—for his new club.

In his defence, Sheringham could point out that he has been without a recognised striking partner so far, with both Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Andy Cole and now Jordi Cruyff injured.

But the England striker fluffed a penalty on the opening day of the season at his old club Spurs, and on Saturday he missed a glaring opening goal at Leicester when it would have been far easier to score.

And Ferguson is as anxious as anyone that his new recruit rediscovers his shooting boots. "Scorers like to score goals, that's why they are scorers, and Teddy is no different from the rest of them," he said.

So when his first goal does eventually come, it will be a very welcome one.

With Solskjaer and Cruyff out of the clash at Everton because of ankle injuries and Cole set for the substitute's bench after recovering from a calf operation, Sheringham will play alongside England new boy Paul Scholes.

Scholes' inclusion looks likely to be the only change to the starting line-up, with Phil Neville once again finding himself rested on the bench. ■

World cup news

Germany squad for upcoming qualifiers

● BONN—German coach Berti Vogts on Tuesday unveiled a 23-man squad for the World Cup qualifiers with Portugal on Sept. 6 in Berlin and Armenia on Sept. 10 at Dortmund.

A smaller squad was set to be named Sept. 1. Goalkeepers: Oliver Kahn (Bayern Munich), Andreas Koeper (Olympique Marseille).

Defenders: Markus Babel (Bayern Munich), Thomas Helmer (Bayern Munich), Juergen Kohler (Borussia Dortmund), Thomas Linke (Schalke 04), Jens Nowotny (Bayer Leverkusen), Stefan Reuter (Borussia Dortmund), Christian Werners (Bayer Leverkusen).

Midfielders: Mario Basler (Bayern Munich), Marco Haber (VfB Stuttgart), Thomas Haessler (SC Karlsruhe), Matthias Hagner (VfB Stuttgart), Joerg Heinrich (Borussia Dortmund), Andreas Moeller (Borussia Dortmund), Michael Tarnat (Bayern Munich), Dariusz Wozniak (VfL Bochum), Christian Ziege (AC Milan).

Strikers: Oliver Bierhoff (Udinese), Fredi Bobic (VfB Stuttgart), Ulf Kirsten (Bayer Leverkusen), Juergen Klinsmann (Sampdoria), Lars Ricken (Borussia Dortmund).

Sweden recalls Nilsson

● STOCKHOLM—Manager Tommy Svensson recalled defender Roland Nilsson on Monday in his only change for two World Cup qualifiers which will decide if Sweden make next year's finals in France.

Sweden visit Austria on September 6 in a group four match they must win if they are to have a realistic chance of qualifying for the finals. Four days later they host Latvia in their penultimate game in the group.

Sweden are third in the group with 15 points, one behind Austria with both teams having played seven matches. Scotland are top with 17 points but have played one more game.

"I need my men to show morale and will-power," Svensson said after naming a 20-man squad which included five home league players and 15 playing in other European countries.

Sweden lost their home qualifying match against Austria 1-0 last October.

Nilsson, who plays for England premier league Coventry, returns after a knee injury in place of Helsingborg's Anders Jacobsson.



Sweden squad:

Goalkeepers: Thomas Ravelli (Gothenburg), Magnus Hedman (Coventry); Defenders: Patrik Andersson (Borussia Monchengladbach), Joachim Bjorklund (Glasgow Rangers), Pontus Kamark (Leicester), Jojo Matovac (Ogreby), Roland Nilsson (Coventry), Gary Sundgren (Real Zaragoza), Mattias Thylander (Malmö); Midfielders: Niclas Alexandersson (Gothenburg), Anders Andersson (Blackburn), Jesper Blomqvist (Milan), Hakan Mild (Real Sociedad), Jonas Thern (Glasgow Rangers), Par Zetterberg (Anderlecht).

Forwards: Andreas Andersson (Milan), Kenneth Andersson (Milan), Martin Dahlin (Blackburn), Mattias Jonsson (Helsingborg), Jorgen Pettersson (Borussia Monchengladbach).

Adams out of England team

● LONDON—England defender Tony Adams has no chance of being fit for England's crucial World Cup qualifier against Moldova at Wembley on Sept. 10, according to Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger.

The news will come as a blow to England coach Glenn Hoddle, who has already been deprived of the services of star striker Alan Shearer, who has a badly damaged ankle, until the new year.

Center back Adams, a dominant figure for England in recent years, started the season with a two-match ban after being sent off in the last match last term against Derby County, and has not played since then.

He was troubled for most of the campaign by an ankle problem and although this has now healed, he is currently sidelined by a cracked rib sustained in a pre-season friendly.

Wenger again left him out of the line-up to face Leicester City at Filbert Street on Wednesday night and said: "It will be two weeks before Tony can play any sort of match. Playing for England, for me, would be impossible."

He has had another reserve game since the rib injury but he tried to play again too early and it is still a problem.

"He is very frustrated and, mentally, it is very difficult for him but we must all be very patient because the ankle took a long time to get right and now that is OK."

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